

DELPHIAN TEXT



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CHAPTER PROGRAMS

PART ELEVEN

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COMPANY

THE BUILDING OF OUR SOCIAL STRUCTURE

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MEDIÆVAL DRAMA

THE DECLINE OF THE THEATRE

REASONS are not wanting to explain the gradual decline and final disappearance of the Roman theatre. Before the last playhouses were closed in the East in the confusion attendant upon invading Mohammedans and in the West by imperial edicts, literary drama had long vanished for sheer lack of appreciative audiences. Heated contests between the Blues and Greens and in the Circus and gladiatorial combats in the great arenas offered more exciting spectacles and, in order to attract the crowds, tragedy became cruel and comedy obscene. In the late Empire the spacious theatres, accommodating tens of thousands of spectators, were filled in a great measure by slaves and foreigners, upon whom quick wit and subtle allusions would have been wholly lost. Something more obvious than classical plays was necessary for their diversion, and mimes and pantomimes filled the place of regular drama.

Before the establishment of Christianity as the state religion, the adherents of this faith had come to look with horror upon theatres, not only because they afforded striking examples of social corruption and were inseparably associated with the ancient religions, but upon the stage the sufferings and martyrdom of Christians had been repeatedly enacted before hooting, jeering crowds. "Until the theatres in which men were made to die and women to prostitute themselves, not in show but in reality, had long been closed and forgotten, the stage was something too vile and horrible for any attempt to Christianize it; nor could the innate dramatic instincts of mankind again find play amid the unhealthy surroundings of a dying civilization."¹

Even had the playhouses not sunk to such indecencies, the Christian Fathers would have denounced them, since all forms of amusements were regarded by them as inconsistent with their faith, which held this world to be a fleet-

ing show, a preparation for the world to come. In his *De Spectaculis*, Tertullian had written:

“Seated where there is nothing of God, will one be thinking of his Maker? Will there be peace in his soul when there is eager strife there for a charioteer? Wrought up into a frenzied excitement, will he learn to be modest? Nay, in the whole thing he will meet with no greater temptation than that gay attiring of the men and women. The very intermingling of emotions, the very agreements and disagreements with each other in the bestowment of their favors, where you have such close communion, blow up the sparks of passion. And then there is scarce any other object in going to the show but to see and be seen. When a tragic actor is declaiming, will one be giving thought to prophetic appeals? Amid the measures of the effeminate player, will he call up to himself a psalm? And when athletes are hard at struggle, will he be ready to proclaim that there be no striking again? And with his eye fixed upon the bites of bears and the sponge-nets of the net-fighters, can he be moved by compassion? May God avert from His people any such passionate eagerness after a cruel enjoyment!”

Augustine discriminated between immoral and harmless plays but Jerome relegated all *spectacula* from the scope of the pious and the Church thereafter adopted his position. No actor could be received into the Church until he had renounced his profession; no Christian could marry into a family of the *scenici* or performers, all of whom were forbidden the sacrament while living and interment in sacred ground when dead, unless they had forsaken a life which the Church deemed wicked.

However, the *scenici* had for generations been accustomed to the scorn of those whom they diverted. To them the rights of citizenship had been denied. Usually slaves of freedmen, they were permitted to ply their trade of amusing the populace under disabilities that varied at different periods. They could hold no political positions and often could not bring action in the courts. Senators and their sons were forbidden to marry any whose parents had been of the *scenici*. Tiberius, finding it impossible to divert

Senators from conspicuous attention to notorious *mimi*, banished players from Italy. Later emperors occasionally followed his example. Each time the plays were suspended, the clamour for their restitution was so strong that the exiled funmongers were allowed to return. Finally the dislike of the Teutons for *spectacula* hastened the fall of the theatres and the influence of the Church in the West in the sixth century was sufficient to bring them to an end.

The *scenici* had embraced a wide variety of talent; dancers, rhapsodists, actors, musicians, jugglers, tumblers, buffoons, and the like. From Rome they had spread out into the provinces, which with but a few exceptions had welcomed them. Although the theatres were closed, many performers of one type or another survived, their descendants to appear later as minstrels and jongleurs. Ere this transformation was completed, there had come about a sort of blending of the Teutonic bard, known as a *scôp* or *skald* with the Roman *mimi*. From the sixth to the eleventh century these wanderers enlivened tournaments, weddings, fairs, and festivals with their music or feats of agility.

The difficulty of bridging the wellnigh thousand years from the decline of the Roman plays to the pageants of the Middle Ages is aptly expressed by Pollard in his treatment of the latter. He says: "In this pious desire to connect new things with old, to link the names of Æschylus and Shakespeare, the services of a motley crew are called into requisition, in which poets, philosophers, saints, mimes, jugglers, monks, nuns, bishops and tradesfolk have all to play their part; but the pedigree is like that of many a modern genealogy, clear at the beginning and the end, with a huge hiatus gaping between."²

The fact that it is impossible to uncover many a missing link need not deter us from believing that the gifts and accomplishments of a considerable class of actors were handed down from one generation to another, the more since the law often required daughters of players to marry in their own class and sometimes to follow the profession of their parents. More and more it is coming to be known that the rise of the troubadours in Provence may be explained because there the old Roman culture was less dis-

turbed by invasions and, due to proximity to Italy, held near to the old traditions.

Prejudiced against shows, the early Teutons gave an honored place to their bards, who ranked among them much as they had with the early Greeks. Among both peoples, they sang of brave deeds. Wandering about from place to place, they were bound to contact the wandering *mimi* and each learned from the other. Mediæval stories have made the minstrels familiar figures. Often they were attached to the courts of kings, and feudal lords gave them patronage. Many a ruler owes his fame in no small measure to the songs extolling his valour and largess, sung first by bards at his board and afterwards spread by them throughout Europe. It is frequently repeated that, save for the minstrel's devotion, the name of Richard the Lion-hearted would long ago have lost its somewhat exaggerated renown.

The history of drama does not include the story of the mediæval bard. It is sufficient to note that drama, properly so-called, came to an end after the invasions of the Teutons, to appear again in the service of religion in the late Middle Ages. During the time of its eclipse, entertainers attached to castles of nobles or to the courts of kings, or wanderers, who followed the road and appeared suddenly wherever people congregated, supplied diversion comparable to the variety shows, farces and music which had been provided in public theatres long before. Although the fun provoked by their antics was often coarse, it would not have been tolerated at all had it retained the indecencies of the late Roman theatre. In companies of twos or threes these wandering minstrels sang, performed tricks and feats of skill—any and every means whereby they might turn a hard-earned coin. The *scôp*, revered in earlier centuries, disappeared. A wandering singer evolved, adding tricks and various accomplishments to his former rôle, merging into obscurity, or appearing when advantage offered; always regarded as outside the pale of respectability, yet sure to be the center of attraction where crowds gathered.

There is no question that the lot of the wandering entertainer of the Middle Ages was precarious in the extreme, with the exception of favorite minstrels attached to the

retinues of nobles or rulers. He was denounced by the upper clergy, who held that in contributing to his support, the poor were robbed of deserved alms. The Church refused him her blessing and last ministries; yet, so unconquerable is the desire for diversion in men, whenever he appeared, he was sure to have an audience.

¹ Pollard: *English Miracle Plays*, XI.

² *Ibid.*

LITURGICAL PLAYS

DURING the Middle Ages learning was largely confined to the clergy, kings and nobles being frequently unable to read and write. The privileged orders—the nobility and clergy—and the peasants, made up society before expanding trade and the rise of prosperous commercial towns led to the development of a substantial middle class. Since the Church service was conducted in Latin, it was unintelligible to the vast majority of communicants. Consequently as early as the fifth century, perhaps earlier, the clergy conceived of presenting *tableaux* to elucidate the service and to place biblical stories before their ignorant congregations.

The Church ritual was full of dramatic possibilities and a vested choir and robed clergy were ready at hand. There was the “blending of symbolic action, Scriptural narrative, outbursts of song.” The biblical stories lent themselves easily to presentation.

“The Bible is the most dramatic book in the world, and its characters are the most splendidly pictorial and theatrical: Shipbuilding Noah, Joseph, the visionary statesman, priest-haunted Saul, psalm-singing David the giant-killer; proud, painted Jezebel, Solomon wise and weak, dancing Salome, prophets and warriors, humble fisher-folk, virgins and Magdalens and nameless queens succeed and jostle one another in these pages as in life, and quickly as they pass us, we never forget them again. All life is there; its mysterious beginnings, its cruelty and greed, its ambition, national and personal, to which success is the smile of God,—defeat, the desertion of Heaven; its joys and sorrows, its increasing perception of some deeper purpose out of ken of the present, something unknown, perhaps unknowable, in knowledge of which alone is happiness. How great, simple, and unconscious are the heroes of the narrative!”¹

Two great religious festivals, almost as old as humanity, were highly dramatic in character: a spring ceremony,

occurring when all vegetation starts anew, and another at the approach of winter, commemorative of its decay. In terms of Christianity, these became Easter and the Nativity. Being fundamental to the faith, it was natural that they should have suggested themselves for dramatic presentation.

At first groups of clerics merely presented tableaux—living pictures—to depict to the eye what was being expressed in an unknown tongue to the ear. By the tenth century dialogue was chanted by the choir divided into two parts. Action and gesture emphasized the meaning. Such graphic means are still employed in some parts of the world to give religious instruction to groping minds.

Biblical narrative thus treated gave rise to what are known as *liturgical plays*, although in reality these were either detached scenes or a series of them. By a comparison of such survivals as escaped the destruction of the Reformation, when in some places almost everything pertaining to liturgy was ruined, it has been possible to trace the growth and development of the religious play.

Immortality has been the haunting hope of people in all ages. So it was natural that the Resurrection should have been the crucial tenet of Christian faith.

“Above all others, in a world of change and death, that narration, of almost challenging belief, of one who rose from the grave! Consider what death meant to the mediæval mind! Death, the ineluctable necessity, terrible and grotesque, partner in one grim trinity with hell and judgment! He drives his levelling chariot wheels over king and pope and kaiser; in the cottage and the court, at fast and festival, he shakes his castanets, the dread, democratic dancer. It passed belief—it passed, at least, experience, that any should escape him, and yet, something that was not only fear, hopefully answered in the heart of man, the message that the conqueror was conquered. . . . Thus it came about that Easter was the great festival of the Church.”²

The desire to bring this Gospel episode home to the hearts of untutored people led first to its simple presentation in tableaux, later to an elaborate liturgical play.

The Gospel narrative relates that on the third day after the crucifixion, Mary, the mother of Christ, with Mary Magdalene and "the other Mary" went to the sepulchre with "sweet spices that they might anoint him." When they beheld the stone rolled away, they were alarmed lest the body had been stolen. An angel bade them not to fear, saying: "He is not here but is risen."

On Good Friday a cross or crucifix would be entombed with every symbol of mourning. On Easter Sunday three priests, robed in white to represent the three Maries, would proceed to the empty tomb, while one-half the choir chanted: "Whom seek ye?" and the rest would reply: "Him who was crucified." Then they would sing: "He is not here but is risen." Gradually the scene was lengthened. The disciples were added, two making a special visit to the tomb to satisfy themselves. The women conversed at length with one another. Mary Magdalene talked with Christ, whom she took to be the gardener.

It so happens that the *Concordia Regularis*, written by St. Ethelwold, bishop of Winchester, in the latter part of the tenth century, still survives. In it is set forth the manner of presenting the resurrection episode. The Bishop's directions, couched in imperfect Latin, have been translated thus: "Since on this day we celebrate the laying down of the body of our Saviour, if it seem good or pleasing to any to follow on similar lines the use of certain of the religious, which is worthy of imitation for the strengthening of faith in the unlearned vulgar and in neophytes, we have ordered it on this wise. Let a likeness of a sepulchre be made in a vacant part of the altar, and a veil stretched on a ring which may hang there until the adoration of the cross is over. Let the deacons who previously carried the cross come and wrap it in a cloth in the place where it was adored. Then let them carry it back, singing anthems, until they come to the place of the monument, and there having laid down the cross as if it were the buried body of our Lord Jesus Christ, let them say an anthem. And here let the holy cross be guarded with all reverence until the night of the Lord's resurrection. By night let two brothers or three, or more if the throng be



VERONA: CHURCH OF ST. MARIA ANTICA
Built before the year 1000



THE HOTEL AT OBERAMMERGAU
A typical scene in this picturesque little town during the period of
"The Passion Play"

sufficient, be appointed who may keep faithful wake there chanting psalms.”

On Easter morning the presentation continued.

“While the third lesson is being chanted, let four brethren vest themselves. Let one of these, vested in an alb, enter as though to take part in the service, and let him approach the sepulchre without attracting attention and sit there quietly with a palm in his hand. While the third respond is chanted, let the remaining three follow, and let them all, vested in copes, bearing in their hands crucibles with incense, and stepping delicately as those who seek something, approach the sepulchre. These things are done in imitation of the angel sitting in the monument and the women with spices coming to anoint the body of Jesus. When therefore he who sits there beholds the three approach him like folk lost and seeking something, let him begin in a dulcet voice of medium pitch to sing: *Whom seek ye, Christians?* And when he has sung this to the end, let the three reply in unison: *Jesus of Nazareth who was crucified.* So he: *He is not here, He is risen as He foretold.* At the word of this bidding, let those three turn to the choir and say: *Hallelujah! He is risen!* This said, let one, still sitting there and as if recalling them, say the anthem: *Come and see where he lay.* And saying this, let him rise and lift the veil, and show the place bare of the cross, but only the cloths laid there in which the cross was wrapped.”³

In December the birth of the Child was enacted before wondering congregations, even as it is still represented in many an Italian church at the Christmastide. A manger was brought into the nave, an image of Mother and Child being placed therein. Clerics dressed as shepherds would stand around, while the Wise Men, led by the Star in the East, came to offer their precious gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. Thus portions of Biblical story were portrayed in manner simple at first, details being added as time went on. Nor were such spectacles presented with uniformity; considerable variety existed in these liturgical plays as presented in different parts of Europe.

The Slaughter of the Innocents was another theme adapted to dramatic portrayal. Child-choristers, robed in

white and preceded by a lamb, would walk around the church in procession, after which they were supposed to be put to death by order of Herod the King. Then an angel called them up to heaven, whither they pretended to ascend by rising and passing into the choir. There a *Te Deum* was sung, concluding the little play.

It is plain that these little scenes, presented by priests and choir-boys, accompanied by hymns and anthems appropriate to the occasion, did not by any means constitute drama as we now understand it, but they heralded its reappearance. All lines were chanted, not spoken, and were given in Latin, the language of the mediæval Church.

Presently the Church became too limited to accommodate the crowds that were attracted by these unusual proceedings. The space surrounding it was next appropriated but unwittingly the excited spectators despoiled graves which clustered around the sacred edifice. Finally street corners and open places were appropriated; and the farther away from the Church the play travelled, the slighter became the hold of the priests upon it. The latent dramatic abilities of the people made them eager to have a part in presenting the plays.

In course of its secularization, considerable humor and levity crept into religious drama. It was thought to be entirely legitimate to take liberties with such unpopular characters as Herod, Pilate or Judas, or to expand the rôle of shepherds and attendants of various kinds. At an early time the lesser clergy, such as deacons and the like, had celebrated the last night of the old year with a burlesque known as the *Feast of Fools*. This was even participated in by the parish priests and was accompanied with boisterous conduct and hilarity unseemly in churches. The ecclesiastical authorities found it expedient to rule against priests lending themselves to such farcical plays and in due time the entire presentation of religious drama devolved upon the municipalities and in England was conducted by guilds, whose membership comprised those already experienced in a wide variety of matters and financially able to meet the expense involved.

The importance of liturgical plays for us today does not lie in any particular enjoyment experienced in reading lines written to be accompanied by acting, but in demonstrating that modern drama, like the Greek, had its beginnings in religion. Having condemned the *spectacula*, or shows, and held all participating in them outside its protection, the Church was nevertheless compelled to turn once more to dramatic art for the instruction of its people. Nor was there any intention of reviving what had been crushed out—quite on the contrary. Yet with the revival of plays there was to come a revival of some features which had never wholly died out.

A human cycle had been once more described. What the Church had once condemned and finally crushed, it restored to serve its own purposes. Once reinstated, drama soon proved too powerful an agent to be dominated by it, and presently the Church was again thundering denunciations against its erstwhile handmaid.

¹ Moore: *English Miracle Plays*, 1.

² *Ibid.*, 4.

³ Quoted by Chambers in his *Mediæval Stage*, Vol. II, 14; 16.

THE THREE MARIES

A Liturgical Play

CHARACTERS

The Gardener: JESUS CHRIST.

The Three Maries: MARY MAGDALENE; MARY, MOTHER OF JAMES,
MARY SALOME.

First Angel.

Second Angel.

[*Enter MARY MAGDALENE, and MARY, MOTHER OF JAMES.*]

Mary Magdalene.

What shall I do, alas!
My Lord went to the tomb,
Today is the third day;
Go now see indeed
If he comes and rises,
As he said to me truly.

Mary, Mother of James.

I will go and see
The body of him who redeemed me with pain,
If it be risen again.
Great comfort he was to us;
That we should have seen his death!
Alas! Alas!

[*Enter MARY SALOME.*]

Mary Salome.

The third day is today;
If the body of Christ be risen,
Go to see.
For the torment which he had
Is ever in my heart;
This sorrow does not leave me.

[*Here she shall meet the other Maries.*]

Mary Magdalene.

Women, joy to ye!
And Mary, mother of James.
And Salome also.
Sorrow is in my heart, alas!
If the body of God himself is gone,
Where may it be found?

Mary, Mother of James.

So it is with me,—
Much and great torment for him;
If he will not, through his grace,
Help me in a short time,
My heart in me will break
Very really through troubles.

Mary Salome.

So with me is sorrow;
May the Lord see my state
After him.
As he is head of sovereignty,
I believe that out of the tomb
Today he will rise.

Mary Magdalene.

Oh! let us hasten at once,
For the stone is raised
From the tomb.
Lord, how will it be this night,
If I know not where goes
The head of royalty?

Mary, Mother of James.

And too long we have stayed,
My Lord is gone his way
Out of the tomb, surely.
Alas! my heart is sick;
I know not indeed if I shall see him,
Who is very God.

Mary Salome.

I know truly, and I believe it,
That he is risen up
In this day.
How will it be to us now,
That we find not our Lord?
Alas! woe! woe!

[*The Dirge.*]

*Alas! mourning I sing, mourning I call,
Our Lord is dead that bought us all.*

Mary Magdalene.

Alas! it is through sorrows,
My sweet Lord is dead
Who was crucified.

[MARY MAGDALENE weeps at the tomb.]

He bore, without complaining,
Much pain on his dear body,
For the people of the world.

Mary, Mother of James.

I cannot see the form
Of him on any side;
Alas! woe is me!
I would like to speak with him,
If it were his will,
Very seriously.

Mary Salome.

There is to me sharp longing
In my heart always,
And sorrow;
Alas! my Lord Jesus,
For thou art full of virtue,
All mighty.

[*The Dirge.*]

*Alas, mourning, I sing, mourning I call,
Our Lord is dead that bought us all.*

Mary Magdalene.

Jesus Christ, Lord of Heaven,
O hear now our voice;
Who believes not in thee, miserable he!
He will not be saved.
When I think of his Passion,
There is not any joy in my heart;
Alas! that I cannot at once
Speak to thee.

Mary, Mother of James.

Gone he is to another land,
And with him many angels;
Alas! now for grief
I am sorrowful.
I pray thee, Lord of grace,
To send a messenger to us,
That something we may be knowing
How it is to thee.

Mary Salome.

O Jesus, full of mercy,
Do think of us;
To thy kingdom when we come,
Hear our voice.

For desire I become very sick,
I cannot stand on my standing,
Alas! now what shall I do?
O Lord of Heaven!

[*The Dirge.*]

*Alas, mourning, I sing, mourning I call,
Our Lord is dead that bought us all.*

First Angel.

I know whom ye seek:
Jesus is not here,
For he is risen
To life in very earnest,
As I tell you,
Like as he is worthy.

Mary Magdalene.

O Angel, now tell me,
The body (none, equal to him),
To what place is it gone,
Like as his grace is great,
Joy to me, with my eyes
To see him yet.

Second Angel.

O Mary, go forthwith,
Say to his disciples
And to Peter,
Like as he promised to them
He will go to Galilee
Very truly, without doubt.

Mary, Mother of James.

Now is he risen again indeed,
Jesus our Saviour,
Gone from the tomb,
Worship to him always;
He is Lord of heaven and earth,
Head of sovereignty.

Mary Salome.

Hence go we to the city,
And let us say in every place
As we have seen:
That Jesus is risen,
And from the tomb forth gone,
To heaven really.

Mary Magdalene.

Never to the city shall I go,
If I do not find my Lord,
Who was on the cross tree.
O Jesus, King of grace,
Joy to me once to see thee,
Amen, amen.

Mary, Mother of James.

Mary, be with thee
All the blessings of women,
And the blessing of Jesus Son of Grace;
Of full heart I pray him,
Joy and grace always good to do
To us now, from God the father.

Mary Magdalene.

My blessing on ye also,
From Christ, as he is gone to the tomb,
Joy to ye to do well today.
Lord, give me the grace
Once to see thy face,
If it be thy will with thee.

Mary Salome.

Amen, amen, let us seek
Christ, who redeemed us in pain,
With his flesh and with his blood;
Much pain he suffered,
For love of the people of the world,
And he is the King of power.

[*Here MARY, THE MOTHER OF JAMES, and SALOME
retire from the tomb, and sit down a little way from it.*]

Mary Magdalene.

He who made heaven, as he is gone to the tomb,
After him great is my desire.
Christ, hear my voice, I pray also
That thou be with me at my end.

Lord Jesus, give me the grace,
As I may be worthy to find a meeting,
With thee today, in some sure place,
That I may have a view and sight of thy face.

As thou art Creator of heaven and earth,
And a Redeemer to us always,

Christ my Saviour, hear, if it regards thee
Disclose to me, what I so much desire.

Through great longing I am quite weary,
And my body also, bones and back.
Where is there tonight any man who knows
Where I may yet find Christ full of sorrow?

[She goes to the garden

[Enter the GARDENER.

Gardener (JESUS.)

O woeful woman, where goest thou?
For grief thou prayest, cry out thou dost.
Weep not nor shriek, he whom thou seekest
Thou didst dry his feet with thy two plaits.

Mary Magdalene.

Good lord, if thou hast chanced to see
Christ my Saviour, where is he truly?
To see him I give thee my land;
Jesus, Son of grace, hear my desire.

Gardener.

O Mary, as I know thee to be,
Within this world, one of his blood,
If thou shouldst see him before thee,
Couldst thou know him?

Mary Magdalene.

Well I do know the form
Of the son of Mary, named Jesus;
Since I see him not in any place,
I feel sorrow, else I would not sing "alas!"

[And then JESUS shall shew his side to MARY MAGDALENE and say:]

Gardener.

Mary, see my five wounds,
Believe me truly to be risen;
To thee I give thanks for thy desire,
Joy in the land there shall be truly.

Mary Magdalene.

O dear Lord, who wast on the cross tree.
To me it becomes not to kiss thy head.
I would pray thee let me dare
Now to kiss once thy feet.

Gardener.

O woeful woman, touch me not near,
No, it will not serve, nor be for gain;
The time is not come;
Until I go to heaven to my Father,
And I will return again to my country,—
To speak with thee.

Mary Magdalene.

Christ, hear my voice, say the hour
That thou comest from heaven again to earth
To speak with us.
Thy disciples are very sad,
And the Jews with violence always
Are round about them.

Gardener.

O Mary, tell them,
Truly I go to Galilee,
As I said;
And besides that, bear in memory to speak
Good comfort to Peter by me;
Much he is loved.

A NATIVITY PLAY

The *Te Deum laudamus* being ended, let the Office of the Shepherds be performed in this manner, according to the usage of Rouen.

Let a manger be prepared at the back of the altar, and let a figure representing the Holy Mary be placed in it. First let a boy, dressed like an angel, from a lofty place in front of the choir announce the birth of the Lord to the canons; and let the shepherds, entering through the main door of the choir, and crossing through the middle of the choir, vested in tunics and amices, say this verse:

Fear not: for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people; for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you: Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.

Let there be many boys, as if they were angels, in the roof of the church, who in a loud voice shall begin:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will to men!

Hearing this, let the shepherds draw near to the place in which the manger has been prepared, singing this verse:

*Let peace be proclaimed on earth,
Glory in the highest!
Earth is leagued with heaven,
By means of grace.*

*Let us go, let us see
This thing which is come to pass.
Let us go that we may know
What has here been announced.*

When they enter the place of the manger, let two clerics, clothed in dalmatics, as if they were the midwives who had served at the manger, say:

Whom seek ye in the manger, O Shepherds? Tell us.

Let the shepherds reply:

The Saviour, the Christ, the infant Lord, wrapped in swaddling clothes, according to the words of the angel.

Whereupon let the midwives, drawing aside the curtain, show the boy, saying:

The little one is here with Mary his mother, of whom long ago in prophecy the prophet Isaiah spoke:

Here let them expose to view the mother of the boy, saying:

“Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son.” And now, as ye go forth, announce that he is born.

And having seen him, with bowed heads let them worship the boy, and salute him, saying:

*Hail, virgin unparalleled!
 Remaining a virgin, the bride of God!
 Before the ages he was generated
 In the heart of the Father,
 Let us worship him now embodied
 In the flesh of his mother.*

*O Mary, with thy prayers
 Cleanse us from the impurities of sin;
 Our life of exile
 So fashion
 That thy son may allow us
 To see his face.*

Then let them turn themselves about, returning into the choir, and saying:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Now we know in very truth that the Christ is born into the world.

MYSTERIES AND MIRACLE PLAYS

THE very nature of liturgical plays sets definite limits upon them. When a biblical episode had been expanded by the inclusion of allied detail it could be lengthened only by adding another to it; this was often done. However, since these were usually substituted for the regular service, the time allotted to the presentation imposed its own limitation.

Every year the dissatisfaction of those unable to gain entrance to the crowded church at holiday time to see the plays became louder and louder. Taken into the churchyard, the scramble to witness them from the most advantageously situated grave led to unintentional injury and desecration. There was presently no help from taking these dramatic presentations into the meadows or to the village green. The objection to showing farcical features within the sacred edifice made this solution desirable. Nevertheless, edicts prohibiting the clergy from participation in plays given outside the churches brought about several inevitable changes. First, none but the clergy were prepared to give the plays in Latin; moreover, the demand for entertainment as well as edification prompted to incorporation of farcical detail. As quickly as the religious drama passed into secular hands, comedy began to encroach upon the solemnity of the scriptural narrative.

Confusion often arises in the use of the two words *mystery* and *miracle* as applied to religious drama. Strictly speaking, all plays based upon biblical narrative were mysteries, while miracles were saint plays, wherein the miraculous always held a prominent part. The ways of God were regarded as past finding out, hence mysterious. In France distinction between the two types of presentation was observed but in England saints' plays never became so popular as on the continent and the term *miracle play* was used indiscriminately of all religious drama.

The oldest surviving mystery play grew up in France in the twelfth century; it set forth the story of Adam and

Eve and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Full directions for the presentation of this play survive.

“A Paradise is to be made in a raised spot, with curtains and cloths of silk hung round it at such a height that persons in the Paradise may be visible from the shoulders upwards. Fragrant flowers and leaves are to be set round about, and divers trees put therein with hanging fruit, so as to give the likeness of a most delicate spot. Then must come forth the Saviour clothed in a dalmatic, and Adam and Eve be brought before him. Adam is to wear a red tunic and Eve a woman’s robe of white, with a white silk cloak; and they are both to stand before the Figure, Adam the nearer with composed countenance, while Eve appears somewhat more modest. And the Adam must be well trained when to reply and to be neither too quick nor too slow in his replies. And not only he but all the personages must be trained to speak composedly, and to fit convenient gesture to the matter of their speech. Nor must they foist in a syllable or clip one of the verse, but must enounce firmly and repeat what is set down for them in due order. Whosoever names Paradise is to look and point toward it.”

God gives Adam instruction as to his obligations and departs; Adam and Eve explore the beauties of Paradise. Then the Devil attempts to win Adam, failing which, he approaches Eve in the form of a serpent. At length the story reaches the point where, due to disobedience, they are driven out of Eden by the angel with the flaming sword.

“Then Adam shall have a spade and Eve a hoe and they shall begin to till the soil and sow corn therein. And when they have sown, they shall go and sit down awhile, as if wearied with toil, and anon look tearfully at Paradise, beating their breasts. Meanwhile shall come the Devil and shall plant thorns and thistles in their tillage. . . . And when Adam and Eve come to their tillage and see the thorns and thistles sprung up, they shall be smitten with violent grief and shall throw themselves on the earth and sit there, beating their breasts and thighs and betraying grief by their gestures. And Adam shall begin a lament.” Finally demons capture them both and carry them away to hell.

In 1264 Pope Urban IV instituted the Feast of Corpus

Christi, commemorative of transubstantiation. After 1311 its observance was strictly enjoined upon the faithful by the Council of Vienna. It fell upon the Thursday following Trinity Sunday and became a popular occasion for presenting religious drama. However, this custom was not everywhere adhered to, for in Chester the annual play occurred on Whitsuntide; other variations were also observed.

It so happens that four great cycles of mediæval plays have survived in England:² those presented in Chester, York, Coventry and perhaps in Wakefield, although this last has not been identified. The Wakefield cycle is also known as the Townley series, because the manuscript remained in possession of a family by that name. Each of these cycles sets forth the complete biblical narrative, from Creation to the Day of Judgment. Rendered by the trade guilds, the exact number of scenes depended upon the number existing in any given year. For instance, had the dyers withdrawn from the carders, forming a separate organization, it would thereupon become necessary to re-divide the story so that each company would have its special portion for presentation. So the surviving Chester cycle contains twenty-five scenes; that of York, forty-eight; Coventry, forty-two, and Wakefield, thirty-two. Fragments of cycles given in several other communities remain and mention is made of others which have wholly disappeared.

In France a stage showing three zones: heaven, earth and hell, was erected for the presentation of religious plays. Placed above one another, like the stories of a building, it was possible to observe what was transpiring simultaneously in the three worlds. In England wheeled wagons were employed; a lower curtained story provided a dressing room for the actors; the upper platform, left open, afforded a stage whereon to act. Today the word *pageant** is applied to an entire spectacle which may be unfolded before an audience; formerly it was used for the wagon that accommodated the actors. Every guild had its own pageant, which during the performance was drawn from one site to another, the actors performing their act in one place, followed by another pageant, while their own was wheeled to the next point of exhibition.

The spectators divided into several groups, each taking its stand at one of the *stations* where the play was to be shown. Some stations become traditionary, such as the Mayor's residence, the town bridge and so on. Prominent men often paid substantial sums for the privilege of having the scenes rendered before their houses, and the money so realized was used to defray those costs which the municipality was obliged to meet. The expenses were borne largely by the guilds.

The time allotted to the presentation of a cycle varied; in York it was crowded into one day, beginning at four-thirty in the morning and lasting until nightfall. In Chester three consecutive days were consumed by the performance. In Coventry it was customary to give half the series one year, the other portion the next. Some acts were necessarily longer than others and delays were inevitable. Yet sequence was obtained by fining any who caused needless waiting.

At first, when biblical stories had been portrayed by the clergy in churches, each episode had constituted a unit in itself; by the time the great religious cycles came into being the whole scriptural narration, from the beginning to the end of the world, had developed into an entirety, the Old Testament incidents forming a prelude to the life of Christ. The majestic characters were portrayed with dignity and reverence; minor characters, such as servants, shepherds, attendants, together with unholy personages, such as Herod, Pilate and Judas, were treated with some license, buffoonery and fun centering around their parts.

In assigning the various scenes to the guilds an attempt was made to give each to those best suited to do it justice. For instance, only the jewellers, or goldsmiths, as they were then called, could have provided the splendid adornment for the Magi. It was assumed that the ship-builders were the only ones competent to construct such craft as would serve Noah and his family for a forty-day flood. The plasterers were thought best able to create the earth, while the Last Supper was given over to the bakers.

Once allotted some share in the festival, a guild was required to acquit itself in a creditable manner. To meet



Courtesy of Goodman Theater, Chicago

WHITFORD KANE AS SIR TOBY BELCH AND ELLEN ROOT AS MARIA IN
"TWELFTH NIGHT"

the necessary expense, each member paid an annual tax. If a guild failed to do its part it was heavily fined. Two members of each organization were usually chosen as Pageant Masters. They collected the fees and paid out the money, fully accounting for it in the end.

If the play to be given was a new one, some one had to be found to write it; if an old one, it frequently had to be revised. Considerable care was exercised in apportioning the parts. Once decided upon, the rehearsals began. The men were too weary at night to rehearse, so they usually met from two to six in the early morning. Breakfast was then supplied them and they were paid a small fee. Eating and drinking were prominent features of the rehearsals.

In records accounting for money paid out we may read such items: "Paid to the players for rehearsals: To God, 2s 8d; to Pilate and his wife, 2s; to the Devil and Judas, 1s 6d."

"At length the great day dawns. The narrow streets of the ancient city are crowded with holiday folk, who have come from far and near to see the plays. Lords and ladies from the castles and great houses of the country are here, with hosts of knights, esquires, men-at-arms, and grooms. Farmers have jogged into the city with wives or daughters; monks, palmers, pilgrims, mountebanks and peddlers, merchants, tradesmen and apprentices, all jostle and elbow each other in their anxiety to get a good place. The members of the crafts, who have assembled at the appointed spot almost before sunrise, are busy dressing for their parts, and putting the finishing touches to the finery of their pageants; all eagerly awaiting the signal to set out on their triumphant progress through the city."³

The heralds ride through the streets, reading the prologues to the performances. One by one the pageants start. In order that all might witness the plays, several sites in the city had been designated for repeating the various scenes; thus a play would start perhaps before some tavern door. After the first guild had there given its allotted scene, that pageant was drawn on to a second site, while pageant number two came up in front of the tavern and continued

with the play. After a while pageants were playing simultaneously in several parts of the city.

Archdeacon Rogers, who witnessed the Chester pageants, wrote of them: "The season of their performance was Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in Whitsun week. The manner of these plays were every company had his pagiante, or p'te, w'ch pagientes weare a high scafolde with 2 rowmes, a higher and a lower, upon 4 wheeles. In the lower they appparelled themselves, and in the higher rowme they played, being all open on the tope, that all behoulders might heare and see at the Abay gates, and when the first pagiante was played, it was wheeled to the highe crosse before the Mayor, and so to every streete, and so every streete had a pagiante playinge before them at one time, till all the pagiantes for the daye appoynted weare played, and when one pagiante was neere ended, worde was broughte from streete to streete, that so they mighte come in place thereof exceedinge orderlye, and all the streetes have their pagiantes afore them all at one time playinge togeather; to see w'ch playes was greate resorte, and also scafoldes and stages made in the streetes in those places where they determined to playe theire pagiantes."

"To this description it may be worth adding, first, that the moveable stage at times was insufficient to meet the demands of the action, and at times the street itself had to serve as a sort of supplementary scene. Balaam, for instance, and the Three Magi, and Saul on his journey to Damascus, had to appear mounted; and as for Herod, he 'rages in the pageant and in the street also.' Again, when the action was of a more complicated nature, two or more scaffolds seem to have been ranged side by side of one another, the actors moving from scaffold to scaffold as might be necessary. This device, together with the simple expedient of writing the name of each locality over whatever rude pretense of scenery may have been painted or set up at the back of the stage, made it possible to execute dramatic movements of some complexity without their becoming unintelligible, and to carry on the double action necessitated by the plan of some of the plays. Much, as a matter of course, was left to the imagination."⁴

Scenery and accessories until the fifteenth century were limited and the imagination supplied much. A long cloth unrolled, half white, half black, showed the separation of light and darkness. More cloth with the stars sprinkled over it represented the skies and heavenly bodies. Gilt was much admired and all the spears, crosses, tools, etc., were coated with it. God's wig, throne, even his face—until that proved injurious—were gilded. A huge barrel partly filled with stones produced an earthquake; globes represented the world and were burned at the day of judgment. Items in the records of expense are most enlightening to us. "Paid for the barrel for the earthquake 3d; paid for attending to the earthquake, 4d; paid for starch to make the storm, 6d; paid for making 3 worlds, 2s; paid for painting of the worlds, paid for setting the world on fire, 5d; paid for keeping the wind, 6d."

A fine hell mouth was an enviable possession. Smoke poured forth from a dragon's mouth, tin cans banged, and noise generally was kept up; the devil and his imps leaped in and out, snatching souls and carrying them to perdition. The devil wore horns and tail; lost souls wore robes of yellow and black to represent flames.

By the fifteenth century we find that rivalry among the guilds led to much ostentation and display. The simplicity of earlier times disappeared, largely speaking. From two to five hundred people often participated in a festival. Each guild with its contributing friends tried to make the best possible showing. Robes became costly and the properties multiplied. Finally the expense of defraying such a spectacle became such a burden that guilds petitioned the city to be released from the tax imposed upon them.

From old guild records have been extracted many an item of expense which brings the business aspect of the annual presentation of the English miracle plays forcefully before us. One may read:

Paid for four pair of angels' wings.....2s 8d
Paid for nine and one-half yards buckram
for the souls' coats.....7s

<i>Paid for painting and making new hell</i>	
<i>head</i>	<i>12d</i>
<i>Paid for pound of hemp to mend the</i>	
<i>angels' heads</i>	<i>4d</i>
<i>Paid to Fawston for cockcrowing.....</i>	<i>10d</i>

Before modern minds can comprehend how it was that people in the thirteenth, fourteenth and fifteenth centuries could look complacently on while God created the earth before them from bits of rock, sticks, with shapes of birds and animals around him, and see the whole Bible narrative set before them, including the Passion of Christ and the Last Judgment, it is necessary to visualize for the time the world of the Middle Ages. Present theories of the universe were still undreamed. The sun was supposed to move around the earth, the center of the cosmos. Heaven was situated above the earth, hell beneath it. For the majority who witnessed the spectacle it supplied the one mental stimulus of the year, for this was an age devoid of newspapers, journals and books, save only hand inscribed manuscripts, treasured in monasteries. The people, unable to read, had also little to see, save such panoramas as nature provided in recurring seasons. The church was the great center of social life, teaching with its frescoes, sculptures, statues, carvings, as well as by its services. Under such conditions the yearly journey to the town where the miracle play was to be given meant rare contact with town life to those who dwelt in country districts.

“So for a long summer’s day or for three days or for nine, scene after scene the great tragedy flashed by, and the eyes of the attendant multitude read it literally as the creed of their own belief, the book of their own life, and their hearts swelled or fainted, melted or were enraptured within them.

“It was all so very real in those centuries of faith and art and passion. . . . Noah’s Ark was as genuine a craft to the fourteenth century as the *Pinta* is to us, and Eve’s apple far more certain than Wilhelm Tell’s. . . . With what white lips the men looked upon, how the women turned their faces from the crucifixion! It was no mere spectacle. It

was truth itself—the truth by which they lived. . . . Allowing for all crudities of comprehension, still the conception is colossal. So long as light strives against darkness and good against evil, so long will the theme retain its power.”⁵

Such was the nature of the mystery play, properly so-called, although, as has already been stated, these were known as miracle plays in England.

In the Middle Ages each church had its patron saint, as Catholic churches still have today. In earlier years when the great religious festivals of Easter, Christmas and others were being celebrated by liturgical tableaux or dialogues by clerics, similar observance was accorded the day sacred to the patron saint. St. Nicholas was a favorite in France and Germany. To illustrate the nature of a miracle play in its slightest form, when the day arrived the image of the saint would be removed from its niche while a priest, robed to impersonate it, would silently take its place. A traveller, personifying either a pagan or one still outside the fold, would appear before the shrine to deposit his treasure in the keeping of the saint while he set out on a journey. Presently thieves approached the image of St. Nicholas (or what purported to be his image), appropriating the treasure. When the traveller returned to find his treasure gone, he became angry and threatened the saint, whereupon it suddenly left its niche, overtook the thieves, who became alarmed at this manifestation and promptly restored the money. Thereupon St. Nicholas would merge again into the stone image, while the irreligious traveller would meekly embrace a faith that could work such miracles.

In some such way as this the meritorious life of the patron saint could be brought before ignorant people, enabling them to grasp something of his importance in the church. This was an age when saint stories were highly popular, the compiler of the Golden Legend assembling tales that had been told for centuries before they were committed to writing.

A miracle play entitled *St. Katherine* was presented in England but only its title remains. Saint plays were frequently shown in France and elsewhere on the continent, but seldom in England.

Finally it became easier to engage strolling actors to put on a saint play for special occasions than to have it rendered by the townsfolk, in consideration for which the players were sometimes able to obtain the privilege of presenting secular performances on their own account in the one available building wherein a considerable audience could be comfortably seated—the neighboring church. Ecclesiastical edicts repeatedly forbade such use of the sacred edifice but the pressure within the community was so strongly in favor of granting these concessions that the parish priest usually conceded it on his own responsibility. Extant records show that money was sometimes paid to companies in lieu of the coveted privilege.

¹ Given at length in Chambers: *Mediæval Drama*, II., 80.

² Clarke: *Miracle Play in England*.

³ Ward: *English Dramatic Literature*, Vol. I., 60.

⁴ Bates: *English Religious Drama*, 178.

* The word pageant was spelled in many ways. In this one contemporary description it is written *pagiente* and *pagonā*, and numerous other forms, such as *pachent*, survive.

ORDER OF THE PAGEANTS OF THE CORPUS CHRISTI
PLAY IN THE CITY OF YORK, A. D. 1415.

Tanners.—God the Father Omnipotent creating and forming the heavens, the angels and archangels, Lucifer and the angels who fell with him into the pit.

Plasterers.—God the Father in his substance creating the earth and all things which are therein, in the space of five days.

Cardmakers.—God the Father forming Adam from the mud of the earth and making Eve from Adam's rib, and inspiring them with the breath of life.

Fullers.—God forbidding Adam and Eve to eat of the tree of life.

Coopers.—Adam and Eve and the tree between them, the serpent deceiving them with apples; God speaking to them and cursing the serpent, and an angel with a sword driving them out of Paradise.

Armors.—Adam and Eve, an angel with a spade and distaff appointing them their labor.

Glovers.—Abel and Cain sacrificing victims.

Shipwrights.—God warning Noah to make an ark out of planed wood.

Fishmongers and Mariners.—Noah in the ark with his wife, three sons of Noah and their wives with various animals.

Parchment-makers and Book-binders.—Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac on the altar.

Hosiers.—Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness, King Pharaoh, eight Jews looking on and wondering.

Spicers.—A doctor declaring the sayings of the prophets concerning the future birth of Christ. Mary, the angel saluting her; Mary saluting Elizabeth.

Pewterers and Founders.—Mary, Joseph wishing to send her away, the angels telling them to go over to Bethlehem.

Tilers.—Mary, Joseph, a nurse, the child born and lying in a manger between an ox and an ass, and an angel speaking to the shepherds, and to the players in the next pageant.

Chandlers.—Shepherds speaking to one another, the star in the East, and angel announcing to the shepherds their great joy in the child which has been born.

Goldsmiths, Goldbeaters and Moneyers.—Three kings coming from the East, Herod questioning them about the child Jesus, and

the son of Herod and two counsellors and a herald. Mary with the child, and star above, and three kings offering gifts.

(Formerly) *The House of St. Leonard, (now) Masons.*—Mary, with the boy, Joseph, Anna, the nurse, with the young doves. Simeon receiving the boy into his arms, and the two sons of Simeon.

Marshalls.—Mary with the boy and Joseph fleeing into Egypt, at the bidding of the angel.

Girdlers, Nailers and Sawyers.—Herod, ordering the male children to be slain, four soldiers with lances, two counsellors of the king, and four women weeping for the death of their sons.

Spurriers and Bridle-makers.—Doctors, the boy Jesus sitting in the temple in the midst of them, asking them questions and replying to them, four Jews, Mary and Joseph seeking him, and finding him in the temple.

Barbers.—Jesus, John the Baptist baptizing him, and two angels attending.

Vinters.—Jesus on a pinnacle of the temple, and the devil tempting him with stones, and two angels attending, etc.

Curriers.—Peter, James and John; Jesus ascending into a mountain and transfiguring himself before them. Moses and Elias appearing and the voice of one speaking in a cloud.

Ironmongers.—Jesus, and Simon the leper asking Jesus to eat with him; two disciples, Mary Magdalene bathing Jesus' feet with her tears and drying them with her hair.

Plumbers and Patternmakers.—Jesus, two apostles, the woman taken in adultery, four Jews accusing her.

Pouchmakers, Bottlers and Capmakers.—Lazarus in the sepulchre, Mary Magdalene and Martha, and two Jews wondering.

Skinners and Vestmakers.—Jesus on an ass with its colt, twelve apostles following Jesus, six rich and six poor, eight boys with branches of palm, singing Blessed, etc., and Zaccheus climbing into a sycamore tree.

Cutlers, Bladesmiths, Sheathers, Scalers, Bucklermakers and Horners.—Pilate, Caiaphas, two soldiers, three Jews, Judas selling Jesus.

Bakers.—The Passover lamb, the Supper of the Lord, twelve apostles, Jesus girded with a towel, washing their feet, institution of the sacrament of the body of Christ in the new law, communion of the apostles.

Cordwainers.—Pilate, Caiaphas, Annas, fourteen armed soldiers, Malchus, Peter, James, John, Jesus and Judas kissing and betraying him.

*Bowyers and Fletchers.**—Jesus, Annas, Caiaphas and four Jews beating and scourging Jesus. Peter, the woman accusing Peter, and Malchus.

Tapestry-makers and Couchers.—Jesus, Pilate, Annas, Caiaphas, two counsellors and four Jews accusing Jesus.

Littesters.—Herod, two counsellors, four soldiers, Jesus and three Jews.

Cooks and Watercarriers.—Pilate, Annas, Caiaphas, two Jews, and Judas bringing back to them the thirty pieces of silver.

Tile-makers, Millers, Turners, Hayesters, Bowlers.—Jesus, Pilate, Caiaphas, Annas, six soldiers holding spears with banners, and four others leading Jesus away from Herod, asking to have Barabbas released and Jesus crucified, and likewise binding and scourging him, and placing the crown of thorns upon his head; three soldiers casting lots for the clothing of Jesus.

Shearmen.—Jesus, stained with blood, bearing the cross to Calvary. Simon of Cyrene, the Jews compelling him to carry the cross; Mary the mother of Jesus; John the apostle then announcing the condemnation and passage of her son to Calvary. Veronica wiping the blood and sweat from the face of Jesus with a veil on which is imprinted the face of Jesus, and other women mourning for Jesus.

Pinn-makers, Laten-makers, and Painters.—The cross, Jesus stretched upon it on the ground; four Jews scourging Him and binding him with ropes, and afterwards lifting the cross, and the body of Jesus nailed to the cross on Mount Calvary.

Butchers and Poultry Dealers.—The cross, two thieves crucified, Jesus hanging on the cross between them, Mary the mother of Jesus, John, Mary, James, and Salome. A soldier with a lance, a servant with a sponge, Pilate, Annas, Caiaphas, the centurion, Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, placing Him in the sepulchre.

Saddlers, Glaziers and Fuystours.†—Jesus conquering hell; twelve spirits, six good and six evil.

Carpenters.—Jesus rising from the sepulchre, four armed soldiers, and the three Marys mourning. Pilate, Caiaphas, and Annas. A young man seated at the sepulchre clothed in white, speaking to the women.

Winedrawers.—Jesus, Mary Magdalene with aromatic spices.

Brokers and Woolpackers.—Jesus, Luke, and Cleophas in the guise of travelers.

Scriveners, Illuminators, Pardoners and Dubbers.—Jesus, Peter, John, James, Philip, and the other apostles with parts of a baked

fish, and a honey-comb; and Thomas the apostle touching the wounds of Jesus.

Tailors.—Mary, John the evangelist, the eleven apostles, two angels, Jesus ascending before them, and four angels carrying a cloud.

Potters.—Mary, two angels, eleven apostles, and the Holy Spirit descending upon them, and four Jews wondering.

Drapers.—Jesus, Mary, Gabriel with two angels, two virgins and three Jews of Mary's acquaintance, eight apostles and two devils.

Linen-weavers.—Four apostles carrying the bier of Mary; Fergus hanging upon the bier, with two other Jews and one angel.

Weavers of Woolen.—Mary ascending with a crowd of angels, eight apostles, and Thomas the apostle preaching in the desert.

Hostlers.—Mary being crowned, angels singing.

Mercers.—Christ, Mary, twelve apostles, four angels with trumpets, four with a crown, a lance, and two scourges; four good spirits and four evil spirits and six devils.

* Arrow-featherers.

† Makers of saddle-trees.

MORALITIES

IN remote places the miracle plays held their own until the close of the sixteenth century but in more populous centers a craving for something less familiar was satisfied by moralities, which were common throughout the fifteenth century and merged at length into interludes.

Few modern readers will quarrel with the writer who observes of moralities: "The very word is a yawn," and who continues: "How could these old plays manage to be so dry and tuneless, with human life in its richness and sweetness all about them?"¹ To understand their one-time popularity we must never forget the alternative: to sit from sun-up until sun-down one day or the better part of three consecutive days watching from thirty to forty floats pass, each pausing to perform its scene. The theme always the same: the *Fall and Redemption of Mankind*. No possible novelty from year to year, save as guilds might render their parts better or worse or, at best, be ingenious enough to introduce a fresh bit of buffoonery in some minor rôle. The great religious cycles became insufferably long; they presented no new situations and the characters were so well known that their every word and gesture could be anticipated.

Thus it came about that instead of treating of humanity as a whole, some one bethought him of considering just one example, one man, *everyman*, *anyman*, an abstract, type man. Since life is a continual strife between good and evil—for so it was then regarded—let us take an individual, even in the cradle influenced by his good and his evil genius or angel, sometimes one in the ascendancy, sometimes another. The choice lies with the person himself, else he would be an automaton. By making plain the result of wrong choosing, moral lessons could be brought more forcefully home to people than by the sermons of a lifetime. Some such thought as this underlay the first morality play. Whereas the miracle concerned itself with the religious *conception*

of the age, the morality had to do with Christian conduct.

Moralities have been called *allegories dramatized*, and the expression is illuminating. The dramatic quality had been apparent in the early allegorical poem, the *Romance of the Rose*. Little imagination is necessary to conceive of it being produced upon the stage, although, to be sure, some of the lengthy discussions in the latter portion would have to be sharply curtailed. Love of allegory endured for generations, Chaucer and Langland being conspicuous among those who employed it. Long after, Bunyan used it in his immortal book.

Liturgical plays had arisen to instruct the masses in the tenets of their faith. The didactic element survived in the miracles and mysteries after these had expanded into great cycles and were presented by laymen, although the demand for diversion and entertainment led to the inclusion of amusing and farcical features. The morality likewise imparted its lesson, which was ethical rather than philosophical. The earlier moralities may well be compared to a type of story written some generations ago, always bearing a moral tacked closely upon it.

Whereas the characters in the mysteries and miracle plays were of scriptural or legendary origin, abstractions were employed in the moralities. Such names as *Good Deeds, Fellowship, Vice, Sloth, Charity, Peace*, and the like, immediately convey an impression of the qualities exemplified. The one important step in dramatic development which the moral plays manifest is *plot*.

The oldest surviving morality bore the name *The Castle of Perseverance*. Like all the moralities, it was presented upon a stage, not on wheeled pageants. An Explainer appeared before the audience to say that at birth God sent a good and an evil angel to accompany each and all through the earthly journey; choice at every turn confronted the individual. Upon the choice made depended earthly happiness and eternal salvation.

"Death waits with his sickle in the doorway, the inevitable shadow deepens, and within the shadow is the fire of Judgment. These things are vital, they are of enduring

interest. Of them the mind of the Middle Ages said, Let us behold that which we so profoundly believe! Play out before us the battle of these powers, let us see that immanent, abiding Self which is each one of us, and we shall not forget!"²

Humanus Genus or abstract Man is the important character in this play. He is seen in infancy, childhood, youth, early manhood and in old age. He yields to *Mundus* or the World and to the pleasures of the flesh. Good and Evil beset him in his cradle. evil winning his heart by offering gold, saying:

"With the world thou mayst be bold
Till thou be sixty winters old;
When thy nose is waxing cold
Then is time to turn to good."

Finally Confession takes him to the Castle of Perseverance (Constancy), the stronghold of the seven Virtues. Here the Devil besieges him, aided by the seven deadly sins.

"The Virtues beat them back with roses, emblems of the Saviour's Passion. This storming scene calls out unbounded enthusiasm from the audience, many of whom have served in the French wars."

Avarice lures *Humanus Genus* away from his strong citadel, and old age finds him back in carnal sin. Death appears and *Mundus*, who has been a boon companion, gives him no comfort but tells him to move along and let another inherit his goods. A youth, typifying the new generation, is awarded his property, while *Humanus Genus* protests that he never before laid eyes on him.

"Then for *I-wot-never-whom* have I laid up rents and lands, and purchased parks and goods, with care and strife, this many and many a day!"

As he dies a debate takes place in heaven as to the final abode of his soul. Truth and Justice would award him his just deserts, but Peace and Mercy prevail.

"Truth, clad in 'sad green,' recounts his misdeeds. Justice, robed in burning red, would refuse him salvation.

'Let him drink as he brew it.'

But Peace, garmented all in black, urges that if any sinner be left unreconciled to God, her mourning has no end, and white-vested Mercy pleads the Divine Passion. So, as always in these old Moralities, pity and pardon close the drama. The sin-stained soul is purified and blessed. *Genus Humanus*, after all his earthly waywardness and weakness, is saved by the grace of God.”^s

In another moral play, called *The Wisdom that is Christ*, the Soul is shown as loving Wisdom, but, corrupted by Will and Mind, is led astray. Six of the seven deadly sins assail the Soul. The stage direction at this point says: “Here runneth out from under the horrible mantle of the Soul 6 small boys in likeness of devils and so return again.” A transformation is presently effected, Wisdom winning the Soul and bringing Will and Mind into harmony with it.

Another, *The World and the Child*, had similar purport. A mother names her babe Dalliance; as he grows to boyhood, yielding to evil ways, he is known as Wanton. As a youth he becomes Love-lust and Liking; at maturity, Manhood Mighty. Conscience pulls him loose from Mundus. His effort to serve two masters proving futile, in old age he learns the lesson of life and his name becomes Repentance.

The later moralities were written after religious controversy had begun and they were often composed as deliberate propaganda, some by Catholics, some by Protestants. The characters are still abstractions, allegory still dominating them, but, instead of the conflict between good and evil, there is substituted that of Faith and Free Will; or other aspects of the long struggle that imperiled the peace of Europe for generations and led to the bitterest wars ever waged.

Best known of all these old moralities and finest in conception is *Everyman*, made familiar by frequent presentation in recent times. Any or every man is summoned by Death, a summons that soon or late must come to all. He would fain wait awhile—twelve years he asks, in which to abandon the life of pleasure which he has pursued and make himself ready for so solemn a messenger as Death. But Death waits on no man and will make no exception of Everyman. However, he may bring along with him whomsoever he

will from among his company of revellers. This privilege heartens him and he asks Fellowship, Kindred and Goods to accompany him on his long journey; but each in turn demurs, with ready excuses. When he urges his possessions, Goods, to remain with him, Goods replies: "Nay, nay, Everyman, I follow no man in such voyages." When Everyman protests, Goods continues: "What, think you that I am thine?" Everyman replies: "I had supposed so." To all who hoarded their worldly wealth, the next words of Goods must have sunk heavily and forbiddingly upon the ear:

"Nay, Everyman, I say no.
 As for a while I was lent thee;
 A season thou hast had me in prosperity,
 My condition is man's soul to kill;
 If I save one, a thousand do I spill.
 Thinkst thou that I will follow thee?
 Nay, not for the world, verily."

The average audience today does not find it very engrossing to sit through a Morality, and is usually prompted to witness it only for the light it sheds upon mediæval plays. Even so, these are usually made more splendid and spectacular now than they were in the Middle Ages, little scenery being then attempted.

At a time when intercourse between countries and even between localities within one land was difficult, before newspapers and journals brought quick interchange of ideas, when diversion and entertainment were comparatively rare, it is plain that the morality play filled its place. It is interesting to us since it served in a measure as a connecting link between religious and secular drama.

¹ Bates: *English Religious Drama*, 201.

² Moore: *English Miracle Plays*, 146.

³ Bates: *English Religious Drama*, 213.

INTERLUDES

THE vices and virtues were presently exhausted and there came a time when it was difficult to set forth their eternal conflict in new guise. Infancy, childhood and youth were eliminated and the moral play concerned itself merely with maturity, as in *Everyman*. The names of characters became less remote and more human, as *Good Deeds* and *Fellowship*. It remained to bring them from the abstract into the concrete: to replace them by flesh and blood; and this was done in the *interlude*.

There has been much contention as to the significance of the word *interlude*, from *inter*, *between*, and *ludium*, a play. Generally interpreted as a short play set in between two other matters, as for example, between courses at a banquet, or to fill a pause for the convenience of those who served, there is much to be said for Chambers' conclusion: that it was "a play between two or more actors." This is in accord with the conditions under which it was shown.

An interlude was a brief comedy, an amusing story dramatized. The earliest interludes retained the didactic element of the moralities, characters themselves sometimes voicing the lessons to be drawn from their ill-spent lives. In *Like Will to Like*, Cutpurse, about to hang, says:

"O, all youth take example by me:
Flee from evil company, as from a serpent ye would flee;
For I to you all a mirror may be.
I have been daintily, delicately bred,
But nothing at all in virtuous lore;
And now I am but a man dead;
Hanged I must be, which grieveth me sore.
Note well the end of me, therefore;
And you, that fathers and mothers be,
Rear not your children in too much liberty."

It is difficult to distinguish between the later moralities and the early interludes. Schelling observes in this connec-



JULIA MARLOWE AND EDWARD SOTHERN IN "ROMEO AND JULIET." 1911
These two are not only gifted actors, but scholars as well. Their costumes
and stage setting show their knowledge of Renaissance life

tion: "The line between the morality and the interlude, as between the later interlude and regular comedy, is artificial at best. But it is clear that the vital principle of the morality was its interest in life and conduct as affecting the actions of men. The vital principle of the interlude was also its interest in life; but the ulterior end and purpose, guidance to moral action, had been lost and the artistic sense set free. The interlude deals with comedy; it loves what is near and familiar, and its methods are realistic."¹

Miracles, moralities and interludes were not separated into clearly defined periods; rather, they were played side by side. The English miracle plays had the whole sweep of Christian faith for their theme, with the Old Testament narrative as a background. The early moralities were designed to influence the conduct of Christians, both having thus a religious significance. The interludes finally broke with religion and aimed merely to amuse and divert the spectator.

Brevity and wit were the two requisites of the interlude. Class names were still retained—the Pilgrim, the Palmer, the Clerk, the Pedlar—characters as well known to those who witnessed the play, as the Laundryman, the Delivery boy, the Mail-carrier, the Policeman, would be, should they be gathered into a little farce today. Lads in school and choirs often presented these little comedies and the earliest companies for theatrical production were formed to perform them. Did the Lord Mayor give a dinner for honored guests, a group of strolling players might appear without announcement, asking that they be allowed to render an interlude.

Under Henry VII a small company of royal players was formed at Court. The boys of the Royal Chapel were among the first to present little plays and the choristers of St. Paul's and Westminster were not slow in following their example.

Wandering players made use of the village green, lacking other space. Having amused their promiscuous audience, they would collect such coins as the spectators would bestow upon them. Did the local parish desire to do honor to its patron saint, it was easier to employ these profes-

sional actors than undertake the laborious task of training rustics.

The distinction between the interlude and the morality became pronounced under the skillful handling of the first interlude master: John Heywood, who divorced it forever from religion. Heywood had been a lad of the Royal Chapel. Later he went to Oxford, after which for many years he was attached to the English Court. His career extended from the reign of Henry VIII into that of Queen Elizabeth but his best work was done for Queen Mary. A staunch Catholic, he enjoyed special favors under the devout Romanist queen. After her death he retired to the continent, where he afterwards died. It must be said that, despite his firm adherence to the faith of his childhood, he was quick to shoot his witty shafts at church abuses.

Among his best known interludes were the *Play of the Weather*; of *Love*, wherein appeared four characters: the *Lover not Beloved*; the *Woman Beloved but not Loving*; the *Lover Beloved*; and *Neither Loving nor Loved*. The *Merry Play between the Pardoner and the Friar*, another between *Johan the Husband*, *Tyb his Wife* and *Sir John the Priest*, with the *Four P's* were among his popular plays.

The *Four P's* is one of the most amusing of his interludes, these being the Pardoner, Pedlar, Palmer and 'Poticary. The Palmer enumerates the many shrines which he, a professional pilgrim, has visited. The Pardoner finally remarks:

“When ye have gone as far as ye can,
For all your labor and ghostly intent
Ye will come home as wise as ye went.”

He has the remedy, here at hand; his pardons remove the need for journeying far and wide.

The Apothecary speaks a word for his own profession:

“Whom have ye known die honestly
Without help of the Poticary?”

The Pedlar proposes that they enter into a contest as to which can tell the biggest lie, he to act as umpire.

“Now have I found one mastery
That ye can do indifferently;
And that is neither selling nor buying,
But even on very lying.
And all ye three can lie as well
As can the falsest devil in hell.
As though afore, ye heard me grudge
In greater matters to be your judge,
Yet in lying I can some skill,
And if I shall be judge, I will.”

The Poticary recounts a marvelous cure he made. The Pardoner tells how he rescued a soul from the depths of hell. At first he was unable to locate his erstwhile acquaintance, but discovered a porter:

“He knew me well, and I at last
Remembered him since long time past;
For, as good hap would have it chance,
This devil and I were of old acquaintance;
For oft, in the play of ‘Corpus Christi’
He hath played the devil at Coventry.”

When Lucifer learned that it was a woman he would have freed, he was more than willing, for he exclaimed:

“For all we devils within this den
Have more trouble with two women
Than with all the charge we have beside.”

The interest in the tale obscured the lie, the Palmer remarking that he cannot understand why women have such a reputation in hell. He himself has wandered the wide world through,

“And this I would ye should understand,
I have seen women five hundred thousand;
And oft with them have long time tarried,
Yet in all places where I have been
Of all the women that I have seen,
I never saw or knew in my conscience
Any woman out of patience.”

The Palmer wins. The Poticary exclaims:

“By the mass, there is a great lie!”

The Pardoner admits

“I never heard a greater, by our Lady!”
while the Pedlar, who umpires the game, concludes:

“A greater! Nay, know ye any so great?”

¹Schelling: *Elizabethan Drama*, I., 78.

FOLK DRAMA

ANY study of mediæval drama should include not only the liturgical plays of the clergy; the miracles and mysteries, presented, at their period of completeness, by the guilds in England; the moralities and interludes, performed by students, choristers and strolling companies; but, in addition, the folk drama as revealed in festivals of the peasantry.

When the Germanic peoples embraced Christianity the transition from the old religion to the new was more formal than real. It will be remembered that hundreds, even thousands, sometimes followed the example of their chieftains and were baptized, as, for example, was Clovis, when he fulfilled a vow made in the midst of battle to espouse the Christian faith should he be victorious. His army quickly emulated their king. Yet not for a moment should it be supposed that these forest folk instantly dropped their deities and cults which had hitherto been so important to them. Their beliefs had been somewhat vague and shadowy, making it more easy to accept a new deity. However, their rituals were always definite and these survived long after their first significance was forgotten.

It was a matter of much perplexity to early Christian missionaries to reconcile the ancient ceremonies, so bound in the life of the new converts, with Christianity, which they had latterly embraced. A letter written by Pope Gregory the Great is very illuminating on this subject. He had previously instructed a missionary in an outlying district to destroy the ancient fanes, sacred to pagan gods. After further consideration he wrote: "Do not, after all, pull down the fanes. Destroy the idols; purify the buildings with holy water; set relics there; and let them become temples of the true God. So the people will have no need to change their places of concourse, and where of old they were wont to sacrifice cattle to demons, thither let them continue to resort on the day of the saint to whom the church is dedicated, and slay their beasts no longer as a

sacrifice but for a social meal in honour of Him whom they now worship."

Such a common-sense view of the matter facilitated the spread of Christianity among Teutonic nations. Many an ancient holy day was sanctified to Christian purposes, making the transition from one faith to another easy for simple minds.

Primitive religions possessed many features in common. They developed as the human mind conceived of propitiating unseen powers—almost always personified—which were regarded as able to send drought, famine or pestilence, on the one hand, or, on the other, to give a bounteous harvest. Without entering upon this broad field of historical interest, regarding which so much has been written in recent years, suffice it to say that nomadic people hold their wealth in herds. As they pass from a roving to a fixed abode, they become dependent upon agriculture. Before the transition is completed there is usually a stage wherein the men still hunt while the women tend crops and foster such food plants as are cultivated.

Fertilization is of primary importance; whether fertility of the herds, so that the cattle multiply, of the women, so that the tribal strength shall be maintained, or, coming into an agricultural state, fertility of the fields, trees and plants. Having enjoyed increase of kine and flocks, and having reaped the rich grain for the winter's supply, the people gave expression to their gratitude in a harvest festival. Consequently among all peoples from remotest antiquity two great festivals have been observed: one in the spring, to welcome the spirit of fertilization; another in the late autumn or early winter, as nature passed into a deep sleep. This was originally associated with ancestor worship and included rites for the dead. Both of these festivals originated in religion and never wholly lost their religious significance, even when this feature had become something to be apprehended rather than explained. Customs still survive in the world traceable to these far-away nature cults, as old as humanity.

Among an agricultural folk nothing was more important than the purification of the fields with songs, dances

and libations. Lest light and heat fail, fires were kindled, the smoke wafted across the meadows by the wind, the ashes scattered over the ground. The field deities were thus invoked and propitiated. To insure sufficient rain for the coming year, jars of water were overturned. "To the primitive mind the obvious way of obtaining a result in nature is to make an imitation of it on a small scale. To achieve rain, water must be splashed about, or some other characteristic of a storm or shower must be reproduced. To achieve sunshine, a fire must be lit or some other representation of the appearance and motion of the sun must be devised."¹

From such simple ceremonies of primitive peoples it is a far reach to the sprinkling with holy water for purification and baptism, yet one is an outgrowth of the other. Ducking, so often resorted to by youths the world over, is a survival of a rain charm. It has even been suggested that the custom of rolling eggs at Easter time harks back to a primitive habit of rolling a flaming wheel down a hill, as a sun charm, the coloring of eggs in brilliant hues being reminiscent of the sun.

As the time went on the original meanings of these ceremonies were lost to view; yet a sense of their importance remained. It was safer to conform to them than to risk incurring the wrath of unseen forces through failure to do so. Even today it is possible to discover traces of old pagan rites in rustic revels. In mediæval festivals, participated in largely by the peasantry, folk drama found its expression.

Speaking of the true meaning of certain of these revels, Chambers says: "Their full significance only appears when they are regarded as fragments of forgotten cults, the naïve cults addressed by a primitive folk to the beneficent deities of field and wood and river, or the shadowy populace of its own dreams. Not that when the mediæval peasant set up his Maypole at the approach of summer or drove his cattle through the bonfire of Midsummer Eve the real character of his act was at all explicit in his consciousness. To him, as to his descendant of today, the festival was at once a practice sanctioned by tradition and the rare amusement

of a strenuous life; it was not, save perhaps in some unplumbed recesses of his being, anything more definitely sacred. At most it was held to be 'for luck' and in some vague general way, to the interest of a fruitful year in field and fold. . . . But even in the lands of the first ardour the old beliefs and, above all, the old rituals died hard.'"²

Finding itself powerless to prevent a continuance of ancient dances and festivals, the Church did what it could to eliminate their more objectionable features. From the beginning churchmen manifested two different attitudes: the rigid, inflexible viewpoint of those who condemned and tried to crush out whatever failed to pass their relentless scrutiny, and the more tolerant standpoint of those who discerned at the start the futility of attempting to remake human nature at once. Fortunately those in authoritative places usually belonged to the latter class, while the protesting voices of the others were heard from century to century.

Dancing played an important part in ancient religions and was likewise conspicuous in mediæval festivals. To cite a familiar example, the May Day ceremonies, even now, perpetuate several ancient rites. In the first place, the Maypole represents the sacred tree around which a chorus once danced yearly to invoke fruition. Again, May Day itself is a survival of an ancient welcome to summer, with its promise of fertility and increase. The choosing of a May Queen probably harks back to an age when a female deity was worshipped by women in whose care the cultivation of food plants for the time reposed, they tilling the soil while their warriors engaged in the chase.

Besides the round dances, encircling the Maypole, processional dances were given in the Middle Ages. They reflected a far-off day when dancers sped from field to field, with ceremonies designed to purify the meadows and insure continued productivity.

Sometimes, but not invariably, the morris-dance was included with the May Day ceremonies. This is interpreted to have been a survival of the sword-dance. Of the early Germans Tacitus wrote in his *Germania*: "Their public spectacles boast of no variety. They have but one sort, and

that they repeat at all their meetings. A band of young men make it their pastime to dance entirely naked amidst pointed swords and javelins. By constant exercise this kind of exhibition has become an art, and art has taught them to perform with grace and elegance. Their talents, however, are not let out for hire. Though some danger attends the practice, the pleasure of the spectator is their only recompense."³

The sword dance is not mentioned again until about the middle of the fourteenth century. Nevertheless, it is believed that it was perpetuated. It has been interpreted not to have been a demonstration of warriors, as at first would suggest itself, but rather to reflect a time when human sacrifice was made by agricultural folk to propitiate a deity. This notion is the more readily accepted since in some of the sword dances one member falls as if dead and is resuscitated during the performance. Like the May Day festivities, the sword dance was associated with spring, when nature renews life.

The dawn of Christianity found Mediterranean lands, especially Italy, celebrating holidays that reached well-nigh from the middle of December to the middle of January. These appear to have resulted from pushing the old autumn festival further along toward the close of the year, to celebrate the death of the old and the dawn of the new. The twenty-fifth of December was long observed as the natal day of Mithras, the Invincible Sun. The date was taken over by Christians as St. Augustine said: "Not in honour of the Sun but of Him who made it." As a matter of fact, the question of the exact date of Christ's nativity was not raised until the fourth century, at which time it could not be established with any certainty.

Kalends and Saturnalia, both marked by boisterous hilarity in Rome, were associated with New Year observances. Bountiful tables were spread, happy omens of plenty to extend throughout the year. Those who overeat at the holidays in the twentieth century are doubtless unconscious that they perpetuate a time-honoured custom, the original intention of which was to symbolize abundance for the whole year long.

Mediæval New Year revels were of many kinds, depending upon the class of society participating in them. One of the most remarkable was the *Feast of Fools*, held by the lesser clergy—the deacons, sub-deacons and choir-boys. Today it would probably be called “High Jinks.”

All year long they had assisted at the tedious services, bearing candles, incense, and performing many useful parts. The text: “He hath put down the mighty from their seats and hath exalted the humble and meek” was given literal interpretation. A Bishop of Fools was chosen, likewise a Dean. The church service was burlesqued, vile smelling incense made of burning leather; sometimes a donkey adorned with all the trappings of ecclesiastical import was marched down the long aisle of the church while those participating in the noisy celebration sang songs in its honour.

“At the first vespers the *Cantor* intoned in the middle of the nave a hymn of the day of gladness: ‘Let no sour-faced person stay within the church; away on this day with envy and heartache, let all be cheerful who would celebrate the feast of the ass.’

“After lauds all marched from the cathedral to welcome the ass which stood in waiting at the great door. . . . One may picture the pause, the beast in his priestly trappings encircled by hilarious celebrants, the popping of corks and gurgling of wine, the toasting of ‘my lord the Ass,’ the quaffing of deep draughts. Suddenly the door is thrown open, and up the aisle the procession streams, conducting the Ass with song:

‘Out of the regions of the East
The Ass arrives, most potent beast,
Piercing our hearts with his pulchritude,
And for our burdens, well undued.

O, Sir Ass, come sing and say,
Open your gorgeous mouth and bray;
You shall have hay, your fill alway,
You shall have oates, beside, today!’ ”⁴

The *Feast of Fools* was celebrated more widely in France than elsewhere. As early as 1199 the Bishop of Paris, at the request of a Papal Legate, issued a request

for the reform of abuses which had already disgraced the celebration, and as late as 1445 the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris sent to bishops throughout France a remonstrance against the scandals which the revels occasioned. They enumerate some of them thus:

“Priests and clerks may be seen wearing masks and monstrous visages at the hours of office. They dance in the choir dressed as women or minstrels. They sing wanton songs. They eat black pudding at the horn of the altar. They play at dice there. . . . They run and leap through the church, without a blush at their own shame. Finally they drive about the town and its theatres in shabby traps and carts and rouse the laughter of their fellows and the bystanders in infamous performances.”⁵

The ass was not everywhere a feature of the performance, although in some places the *Feast of Fools* and the *Feast of Asses* seem to have been one and the same.

The first fun to penetrate to religious spectacles came during the age of liturgical plays when Balaam's ass was brought into the church. It is unnecessary to say that the moment a donkey poked his head into a church door it would be impossible to preserve the usual solemnity. One bray would set the most imposing tableau at naught. Its presence was permitted in connection with a portrayal of the prophets.

Certain it is that the dances around the Maypole, the sword dances and even the *Feast of Fools* did not constitute drama, properly so-called, yet beyond doubt they indicated dramatic tendencies. Further, they testified to the deep dramatic instinct innate in man. Folk songs, dances and plays comprise a field of study in themselves and after all, they have made small contributions to modern drama. Nevertheless, some knowledge of rural festivals is helpful for tracing the expansion of the actor's art. Early dramatists drew continually upon village customs, superstitions and revels, all of which were familiar to their audiences.

¹Chambers: *Med. Stage*, I., 120.

²Ibid., 94.

³*Germania*, XXIV.

⁴Gayley: *Plays of Our Forefathers*, 36.

⁵Translated in Chambers: *Med. Stage*, I., 294.

GROWTH OF ITALIAN DRAMA

1. EARLY ITALIAN DRAMA

LITURGICAL drama appeared first of all in Italy, where the first mystery play of which we have extended information was given in the thirteenth century. However, since secular drama replaced religious plays earlier here than elsewhere, fewer examples survive in Italy than in France or England. There were several reasons why the trend of dramatic development in the peninsula should have been unlike that in England and France. The Renaissance came first to Italy, reviving an interest in classical achievements and consequently placing much stress on drama. As a result, spectacular performances which took place here during the fifteenth century far outshone those of other European lands. Again, a growing sense of nationality in France and England led to the rise of a national drama in both countries, while in Italy nationality was long retarded. The fine arts were patronized by dukes and despots, able to provide costly and elaborate productions, as a rule set before highly selective audiences, while the people were entertained by a low type of farce, tolerated in the absence of anything better. On the one hand, then, we find imposing spectacles, with their rich robes and accessories, given with much elaboration at the Courts of princes, and on the other, the farcical shows of the streets. These were spirited and lively but usually characterized by coarse jests and witticisms.

No court of Italy extended more generous patronage to drama than that of Ferrara, where Duke Ercole d'Este earned the name of home of Italian drama for his little duchy. It happens that the description of a religious play presented during the festivities attendant upon the wedding of Lucretia Borgia has been preserved in a letter written by Isabella d'Este to her husband, the Marquis of Mantua, in April, 1503. She wrote: "Today the representation of

the Annunciation has been given. I went to the Castello to fetch the lady, who continues to show me great honour and affection, and we went together to the Archbishop's house, where I found my lord father and saw the wooden stage which had been erected and sumptuously adorned for the occasion. A young Angel spoke the arguments of the play, quoting the words of the Prophets who foretold the Advent of Christ, and the said Prophets appeared, speaking their prophecies translated into Italian verse. Then Mary appeared under a portico supported by eight pillars, and began to repeat some verses from the Prophets and while she spoke, the sky opened, revealing a figure of God the Father, surrounded by a choir of angels. No support could be seen either for His feet or for those of the angels, and six other seraphs hovered in the air, suspended by chains. In the centre of the group was the Archangel Gabriel, to whom God the Father addressed His words, and after receiving his orders, Gabriel descended with admirable artifice, and stood, half-way in the air, at the same height as the organ. Then, all of a sudden, an infinite number of lights broke out at the foot of the angel-choir, and hid them in a blaze of glory—which really was a thing worth seeing, and flooded all the sky with radiance. At that moment the Angel Gabriel alighted on the ground, and the iron chain which he held was not seen, so that he seemed to float down on a cloud, until his feet rested on the floor. After delivering his message he returned with the other angels to heaven, to the sound of singing and music and melody, and there were verses recited by spirits, holding lighted torches in their hands and waving them to and fro as they stood supported in the air, so that it frightened me to see them. When they had ascended into heaven, some scenes of the Visitation of St. Elizabeth and St. Joseph were given, in which the heavens opened again and an angel descended, with the same admirable contrivance, to manifest the Incarnation of Jesus to Joseph, and set his doubts at rest regarding the Conception of the Holy Virgin. So the *festà* ended.”¹

In another letter she related that the Magi were shown in a spectacle, “offering their gifts at the cradle of Bethle-

hem, with the guiding star in the sky above, and a fine display of opened heaven and angelic choirs; . . . while the Massacre of the Innocents moved the spectators to tears and many women and children who were present cried aloud."²

These descriptions are instructive as to dramatic development attained by the opening of the sixteenth century. In the first place, more finished presentations of biblical stories were possible when the action took place on a permanent stage, particularly as the entire performance could so be directed as a unit, instead of handled in a series of scenes, as was the case with the Guild plays in England. The *Rappresentazioni Sacra*, as the religious drama was now known, had become very elaborate in the fifteenth century, as these descriptions indicate. The writer distinctly states that these plays were rendered in Italian.

Around the Courts of princes an academic drama had arisen, the work of writers imbued with classical learning. They modelled their plays on those of classical playwrights to a degree precluding any originality. So sure were these Greek and Latin enthusiasts that Plautus and Terence had established models which could not be improved upon that one after another smothered any individuality he might have developed in his effort to follow in the footsteps of his acknowledged masters.

It is to the drama of the people then that the student turns to find something significant for the future—to these farcical shows that were played in the streets, wherever space and opportunity of gathering a crowd offered. Until very recently these crude comedies have been explained as having had their origin in Roman survivals but latterly this theory has been cast aside. While they doubtless held a position relative to that of the Mimes and Atellanæ in imperial Rome, they are now thought to have had no connection with these but to have been born of the times. A nondescript type of people eked out an existence by creating a demand for their wares by farcical entertainment. As time went on, a regular improvised comedy was to grow out of their crude farces, to be known as the *commedia dell'arte*. It so happens that a highly instructive description of

the earlier type of farce has come down from the pen of an Englishman who visited Venice in 1603. His account indicates that what he saw was nothing new; for generations this class of diversion had been popular in Italy. His comments on these street shows run as follows:

“I hope it will not be esteemed for an impertinence to my discourse if I next speak of the mountebanks of Venice, seeing that amongst other things that do much famous this City, these two sorts of people, namely the courtesans and the mountebanks are not least: for although there are mountebanks also in other Cities of Italy: yet because there is a greater concourse of them in Venice than else where, and that of the better sort and the most eloquent fellows; and also for that there is a larger toleration of them here than in other Cities (for in Rome, etc., they are restrained from certain matters as I have heard which are here allowed them) therefore they use to name a Venetian mountebank for the principal mountebank of all Italy; neither do I much doubt but that this treatise of them will be acceptable to some readers as being a mere novelty never before heard of (I think) by thousands of our English Gallants. When I was in Venice they oftentimes ministered infinite pleasure unto me.

“I will first begin with the etymology of their name: the word mountebank (being in the Italian tongue *monta 'in banco*) is compounded of two Italian words, *montare*, which signifieth to ascend or go up to a place, and *banco*, a bench, because these fellows do act their part upon a stage, which is compacted of benches or forms, though I have seen some few of them also stand upon the ground when they tell their tales, which are such as are commonly called charlatans. . . . The principal place where they act is the first part of St. Mark's Street that reacheth betwixt the West front of St. Mark's Church, and the opposite front of St. Geminian's Church. In which, twice a day, that is in the morning and in the afternoon, you may see five or six different stages erected for them: those that act upon the ground, even the aforesaid charlatans, being of the poorer sort of them, stand most commonly in the second part of St. Mark's not far from the gate of the Ducal Palace. These mountebanks at

one end of their stage place their trunk, which is replenished with a world of new fangled trumperies. After the whole rabble of them is gotten up to the stage, whereof some wear visards,* being disguised like fools in a play, some that are women (for there are divers also among them) are attired with habits according to that person that they sustain; after they are all upon the stage, the music begins. Sometimes vocal, sometimes instrumental, and sometimes both together. This music is a preamble and introduction to the ensuing matter: in the mean time while the music plays, the principal mountebank, who is the captain of the rest, opens his trunk and sets abroach his wares; after the music hath ceased, he maketh an oration to the audience of half an hour long, or almost an hour. Wherein he doth most hyperbolically extol the virtue of his drugs and confections, though many of them are very conterfeit and false. Truly I often wondered at many of these natural orators. For they would tell their tales with such admirable volubility and plausible grace, even *extempore*, and seasoned with that singular variety of elegant jests and witty conceits, that they did often strike admiration into strangers that never heard them before: and by how much the more eloquent these naturalists are, by so much the greater audience they draw unto them, and the more wares they sell.

“After the chiefest mountebank’s first speech is ended, he delivereth out his commodities by little and little, the jester still playing his part, and the musicians singing and playing upon their instruments. The principal things that they sell are oils, sovereign waters, amorous songs printed, apothecary drugs, and a commonwealth of other trifles. The head mountebank at every time he delivereth out anything, maketh an extemporal speech, which he doth often intermingle with savory jests (but spiced now and then with singular scurrility) that they minister passing mirth and laughter to the whole company, which perhaps may consist of a thousand people that flock together about one of the stages. . . .

“I have observed marvelous strange matters done by some of these mountebanks. For I saw one of them hold



DOCTOR FAUSTUS IN A MODERN (1918) SETTING
The Good and Evil Angels appear in the scholar's study

a viper in his hand, and play with his sting a quarter of an hour together, and yet receive no hurt; though another man should have been presently stung to death with it. . . . Moreover, I have seen some of them do such strange juggling tricks as would be almost incredible to be reported. Also I have observed this in them, that after they have extolled their wares to the skies, having set the price of ten crowns upon some of their commodities, they have at last descended so low that they have taken for it four gazets, which is something less than a groat. These merry fellows do most commonly continue two good hours upon the stage, and at last when they have fed the audience with such passing variety of sport that they are even cloyed with the superfluity of their conceits, and have sold as much ware as they can, they remove their trinkets and stage till the next meeting.”³

Before the establishment of public theatres and the formation of regular companies, there was no element of permanency in the presentation of plays. For example, it is related that a friend wrote to the Duke of Ferrara for a play which had been presented at his Court. He replied that the various parts had been distributed among those who gave it and, not having been collected afterwards, the play was no longer available. It came about in the course of time that the more enterprising of the actors gradually formed themselves into little companies of ten or a dozen. They became attached to the Court of some prince, spending a portion of their time in his domain, then setting out on the main highways to traverse France and other countries. Evidences of these strollers are to be found in the records of disbursements made to them by kings who gave them patronage. So it came about that the Italian comedies exercised an influence throughout western Europe. In Shakespeare's time Italy was regarded as the golden clime, the land of song and sunshine. Its gaiety was the comment of returned travellers and the itinerant companies did much to give it a certain glamour beyond its borders, so that an Italian setting was sure to make an appeal under more sombre skies.

2. THE COMMEDIA DELL' ARTE

By the middle of the sixteenth century improvised comedy had won its established place in Italy. It was improvised only in part. Plots were thoroughly developed, character types understood; entrances and exits of each written in the framework that served the little company of actors. A few stock characters were invariably included: a Magnifico, or Duke; a Captain, who was generally representative of the Spanish captains, arbitrary, arrogant and unpopular in Italy; a lover or two, two or three women, the *prima donna*, the *seconda donna*, the doctor—Dr. Gratiano—Colombina, the serving maid, Pantaloon, Harlequin and others. Some of them wore masks. Each made it his chief concern to accumulate a fund of sayings that would stand him in good stead under any and all circumstances. The lovers were sure to quote lines from sonnets, especially those of Petrarch. Pantaloon would amass a great number of wise old saws; not until the performance did any of them know exactly what they would do or say. Experienced in making the most of the moment, taking their cues from their associates, their inspiration from the local situations, these companies enacted little comedies which sparkled with wit, and held the unflagging attention of the motley audiences.

“Gradually the players formed themselves into guilds whose prerogative was acting; gradually, by a combination of effrontery and merit, they made their way into the presence of nobles powerful enough to protect them and to give them position; finally through their attachment to great families they became firmly enough established to venture on their own initiative something bolder than the mere representation of the texts given them. It is in this last moment of their successful social climbing that they seem to have thought of creating extempore plays, yet not until they went at least one step farther and began to emancipate themselves from aristocratic patronage by looking to a larger public for approval could they have dared to bring from the streets and squares, farcical themes and masked clowns of popular origin and to introduce them often and

systematically into plays of semi-literary appeal; thus only after the middle of the sixteenth century do *commedie dell' arte* as we know them,—outline plots filled in by extempore dialogue—begin to be recorded.”⁴

The author, and manager in one, chose some subject, modified it to suit his needs, determined the characters, devised certain situations, divided his material into acts and scenes, developed the plot and made the whole ready for his company. Then he decided to whom the various characters should be assigned, in which scenes they should appear, how long remain on the stage, what in general each should do and say. The rest was left to the actors themselves. Such skeletons of plays were known as scenarios. The French called them the canvas, the embroidery being done by the artists. Tables containing the plot of the play, the names of the characters represented, the entrances and exits and the cues for the music were posted up to assist the memories of the improvising actors. Beyond this, the success of the comedy rested wholly with the performers; their wit and repartee, their jokes and outbursts of feeling gave the play success or failure. In time tradition furnished a common store of knowledge upon which the actor drew. Dialogues were to a great extent spontaneous; soliloquies were designed to give the audience such information as the action failed to supply.

We may infer from instructions for actors which survive from these years that many blunders must have occurred to mar the production when actors were unevenly matched or when they were but indifferently proficient. “The actors are enjoined to notice well where the scene is laid, so that one of them may not speak of Rome, where another has just mentioned Naples, or that he who comes from Spain may not say that he comes from Germany. They shall also pay close attention to the houses, and know where their own house is, so that they do not run into the wrong house, which always looks ridiculous. Nor is it well if a father cannot remember the name of his son or a lover of the beloved one.”

To be a good actor a man needed not alone a rich store of knowledge, an elastic imagination and ready wit, but he

must needs be quick to respond to the words and actions of his colleagues, thus to give the impression to those who witnessed the play that everything had been determined upon beforehand.

Riccoboni, a famous Italian actor, left a history of the Italian theatre in which he dwelt at length upon the advantages of improvised comedy.

“Nobody can deny that it has a charm of its own, of which the written play can never boast. Improvisation gives opportunities for variety in playing, so that though we see the same canvas each time, it is nevertheless a different play. The actor who improvises, acts with more animation and in a more natural way than he who performs a part he has learned by heart. People feel better, and consequently say better, what they invent than what they borrow from others by means of the memory. But these advantages are purchased at the price of many difficulties; clever actors are required, moreover actors of even talent; for the drawback of improvisation is, that the art of even the best actors absolutely depends on his fellow-performer; if he has to act with a colleague who does not reply exactly at the right moment, or who interrupts him in the wrong place, his words miss part of their effect, or his spirit is gone. To an actor who depends upon improvisation, it is not sufficient to have face, memory, voice, even sentiment; if he is to distinguish himself, he must possess a lively and fertile imagination, a great faculty of expression, he must master all the subtleties of language, possess all the knowledge which is required for the different situations in which his part places him.”

The inconstancy of husband and wife has ever appealed to Italian audiences. The well-worn plots still continue to be set forth in new dress. Sometimes it was the father who was deceived, more often the husband, and the fun of the play turned upon the completeness of his discomfiture. Intrigue and comic situation were the burden of these plays, which supply a link in the long chain of dramatic development.

In these improvised comedies the same characters appeared again and again. The maids and valets correspond

in a measure to the Greek slaves. The harlequins supplied much of the fun. In the earlier comedies they were stupid fools, always being imposed upon by everyone. Later they became clever jesters. Pantaloon was a favorite and appeared in many places. He was the butt of all jokes; easily deceived, he would quickly fly into a passion which would pass away immediately. He was fond of the tavern and fond of women, generally occupying himself in courting them. He wore the long trousers known by his name, although they were changed after a time for long stockings and knickerbockers.

The Pedant was a well known character. Absent-minded, giving wise saws and sprinkling his sentences with Latin phrases, he corresponded to the recluse or scholar shown frequently upon the modern stage.

Pulcinella was the scoundrel who cheated on every hand, stole when he could and lied without conscience. In one comedy wherein he played his accustomed rôle, he is shown to belong to a band of gypsies. While one of his number is telling the fortune of a stupid peasant, Pulcinella decides to steal the farmer's donkey. Quietly slipping the halter from its head, the animal runs away, while he places the halter upon his own head. The peasant turning back to his load beholds in amazement the spectacle of a human being thus constrained, whereupon Pulcinella, always equal to the occasion, relates that in his boyhood he was disobedient to his mother, who laid the spell upon him to be a donkey for five years, five months, five days and five hours. This period has just elapsed and he is now himself again. He shakes hands with the peasant and thanks him for having been indulgent to him during his donkey days. The astonished peasant craves pardon for having seen in him only a donkey, and in response to Pulcinella's request that he be allowed to keep the halter as a remembrance, adds such coin as his slender purse permits.

It was in the presentation of these improvised plays that women were first employed on the stage in Italy. In 1636 a successful manager gave his reasons for preferring them. "I will never follow the custom of making boys play the parts of women or young girls, especially as I

have seen the drawbacks of it in certain academies. In the first place, these young men do not know how to dress themselves in costumes which do not belong to their sex, so they are dressed at home by their women or flirting servant-girls, who frequently make fun with them Thus disguised in female attire, these children go out and present themselves in the town, chatting and joking with everybody, and they arrive at the theatre in an untidy, disorderly state, so that their friends or teachers have to comb their hair again, paint them afresh, and arrange their collars and ornaments. . . .

"It is more natural that women should perform their own parts; they are able to dress themselves, and as they are respectable, they set a good example instead of creating scandal. . . .

"And besides, actresses are women like others. . . . They cannot err without its being known by all, and religion apart, they are bound to be more careful and discreet in their behavior than the women who can cover their fault with the cloak of hypocrisy."

From Italy the practice of having women impersonate feminine characters spread into France and England. Their grace and adaptability soon won for them a permanent place. However, women were still unknown upon the English stage in Shakespeare's time, and audiences manifested their displeasure when they first appeared in England.

Another innovation wrought by the managers of the *Commedia dell' Arte* was the use of a curtain to separate the actors and the spectators. Since this required a platform enclosed on three sides, it brought into use what is known as the picture-frame stage,—“the fourth wall having been removed to allow us to watch what is happening within the room.” The fact that this change was effected during the period of greatest excellence in the art of painting is significant.

¹Cartwright: *Isabella d'Este*, I., 251.

²Ibid., I., 253.

³*Coryat's Crudities*, II., 50. The old spelling has been modernized in some cases. Coryat, an English traveler, visited Venice in 1603.

⁴Winifred Smith: *The Commedia dell' Arte*, 28. This is the best presentation of the subject in English.

*Masks.

EARLY ENGLISH DRAMA

THE FIRST ENGLISH COMEDIES

THE interlude, in the skilful hands of John Heywood, had exhibited considerable advance in the development of character. The Palmer and Pedler, the Pardoner and Poticary were no abstractions set upon the stage. They were not only true to life; they were life itself. It remained for the first writers of comedy, properly so-called, to bring plot to a similar importance.

From the first inclusion of humour in the religious plays its occasional occurrences had been by far the most popular portions of the presentation. As soon as the mysteries and miracles fell into secular hands, every possible situation where fun could be inserted was seized upon. Finally the interlude had broken with the serious and was fashioned for entertainment pure and simple.

It probably did not occur to Nicholas Udall that he was attempting anything radically unlike the later interludes, although he modelled his play on one of the comedies of Plautus. Born probably in 1505, he had studied at Oxford and was for some years head master at Eton, afterwards filling the same position at Westminster. An ardent student of the Latin comedies, Udall conceived of writing an English play similarly constructed. The result, *Ralph Roister Doister*, has been accounted the first English comedy. The story has been summarized thus: "The hero, Ralph Roister Doister is a braggart and a coward; well-to-do, but foolish in his use of wealth; boastful before proof but timid in the hour of trial; ridiculously vain of his appearance, with a trick of dangling after any woman whom chance throws in his way. A parasite and boon companion, called Matthew Merigreek, turns him round his finger by alternate flatteries and bullyings. . . .

"This clever knave discovers that Ralph is in love with a widow, Dame Christian Custance, who is betrothed to

the merchant Gawin Goodluck. While Goodluck is away upon a voyage, Ralph and Merigreeke pester the widow with love-letters, tokens, serenades, and visits. Her opinion of Ralph is that he is a contemptible coxcomb, not worth an honest woman's notice. She therefore treats his wooing as a joke; but finding that she cannot shake him off, makes the best fun she can out of the circumstances. This gives a color of familiarity to his attentions; and a servant of Goodluck's appearing suddenly upon the scene while Ralph's courtship is in full progress, arouses his master's jealousy. Dame Custance is now placed in a difficult position, from which she is finally extricated by the testimony of an old friend, who was acquainted with her behaviour in the matter, and also by the cowardly admissions of the simpleton Ralph."¹

The play falls into five acts and several scenes. The characters are clearly and forcefully drawn but it is the progressing situation, the plot, that gives it distinction. In the first two acts, Roister Doister attempts to win Dame Custance by gifts, letters and attentions; in the third, Merigreek plays him false and complicates his position by altering his letters and otherwise frustrating his efforts. The fourth act reveals the jealousies of Goodluck, his suspicions aroused by the reports that have reached him. Finally, the last act sees the conclusion of the whole matter; all is explained and everyone joins in good wishes for the happy couple.

In 1566 another play, destined to attract considerable comment was presented by students at Christ's College, Cambridge. It is not certain who wrote it but authorship has long been credited to one John Still. This comedy was called *Gammer Gurton's Needle* and had to do with rustics, whose provincialisms and antics were always refreshing to the more enlightened and sophisticated. The droll story ran thus: Gammer Gurton, a simple country woman, loses her one and only needle; this is inopportune, since Hodge, employed by her to till her land and sharing the comforts of her meagre home, has torn his clothes and needs to have them patched. At that time no type of beggar was more common than the "Poor Toms," or half-wits, who often

affected madness to eke out a living from alms bestowed upon them, half in pity, half in scorn. Diccon, such a half-wit, causes all the complications that now arise to produce one amusing tangle after another. He persuades Gammer that Dame Chat, the tavern-keeper's wife, has taken her needle; he tells Dame Chat that Gammer thinks she has stolen her cock. The two dames meet and it is necessary to call in Dr. Rat, the curate, to appease them, since they both talk excitedly about different matters. Diccon tells Dame Chat that Hodge is going to crawl through a hole in the wall to take her chickens, in retaliation; to Dr. Rat he says that if the curate will look through the hole he will see the needle which Dame Chat has taken. It is needless to say that the first appearance of a head through the wall meant a stormy reception from Dame Chat. At last Diccon is found out and forced to apologize. Doing so, he hits Hodge a blow, which elicits a yell from him because the long lost needle, concealed where Gammer unwittingly left it when patching his breeches, is plunged into his thigh by the blow. Here again it is the progressing situation, the plot, which gives the little comedy its chief charm.*

¹Symonds: *Shakespeare's Predecessors*, 164.

* For illustrative portions of *Ralph Roister Doister*, see Appendix.

EARLY ENGLISH TRAGEDY

IN the first English tragedies many features of the old moralities survive. Life has been infused into the characters but allegory still plays its part.

Cambyses was written by Thomas Preston, a Fellow at King's College, Cambridge, in 1561, according to some authorities—1569 by others. It has been accounted the "worst piece of work ever produced by a man of culture and education," although the bestowal of such judgment requires fine discrimination. Its scope was indicated on the title-page as being "A Lamentable Tragedie mixed full of pleasant mirth containing the Life of Cambyeses King of Persia from the beginning of his kingdome unto his Death, his one good deede of execution, after that, many wicked deedes and tyrannous murders committed by and through him, and last of all, his odious death by Gods Justice appointed."

Preston found the story in Herodotus. He assembled characters helter-skelter and submerged his play in gore. The Persian king sets forth to conquer Egypt, returns to execute a usurping minister, murders his own brother, marries his cousin against her will, only to have her presently executed; he precipitates sundry other crimes, so that his own accidental death, caused by his sword penetrating his heart as he leaps upon his horse, must have brought relief to a long suffering audience. The old Greek Nemesis broods over the play.

How thoroughly the play came to stand for extravagance and passion may be judged from the words of Falstaff, in *Henry IV*, when he exclaims:

"Give me a cup of sack to make my eyes look red, that it may be thought I have wept; for I must speak in passion, and I will do it in King Cambyeses' vein."²

Two years later the old Roman legend of Virginia became the subject of a tragedy, *Appius and Virginia*. Happy domestic life was first portrayed—then and ever since a

favorite subject in English literature, sure to win a sympathetic response from an audience. Poetry was still the medium of dramatic expression and alliteration, characteristic of Old English verse, was often employed. After Virginius has stabbed his daughter to save her from shame at the hands of Appius, the latter exclaims:

“O curst and cruel cankered churl,
O carl unnatural.”

It was about this time that the Classical Revival stimulated a new interest in the Latin dramatists, particularly in the plays of Seneca, which had been translated into English about the middle of the sixteenth century. An interlude, destined to become known as the earliest English tragedy, was presented some years later by gentlemen of the Inner Temple, as entertainment provided for Queen Elizabeth. In view of the sovereign's extensive learning, it was natural that a historical subject was chosen, a legendary king of Britain. The argument set forth the scope of the tragedy in this way: “Garboduc, King of Britain, divided his realm in his lifetime to his sons, Ferrex and Parrex; the sons fell to destruction; the younger killed the elder; the mother, that more dearly loved the elder, for revenge killed the younger; the people moved with the cruelty of the fact, rose in rebellion and slew both father and mother; the nobility assembled and most terribly destroyed the rebels; and afterwards, for want of issue of the prince, whereby the succession of the crown became uncertain, they fell to civil war, in which they and many of their issues were slain, and the land for a long time almost desolate and miserably wasted.”

Such surfeit of tragedy should have proved sufficient for even a sixteenth century audience, that craved gory deeds.

As a matter of fact, none of these murders were enacted upon the stage; each was announced in turn by a messenger. A chorus sang moralizing songs at the conclusion of the first four acts. Seneca's custom of dividing his tragedies into five acts and several scenes was followed. Because it was not thought possible to hold an audience attentive throughout a play composed of lengthy speeches

and related horrors, a Dumb Show, or pantomime, was enacted before each act.

The most remarkable innovation in *Garboduc* was its expression in blank verse instead of rhyme, which hitherto had held drama hampered. To be sure, there is little in the stiff sentences of this play to suggest Marlowe's "mighty line" or the flexible versification of Shakespeare; yet the fact remains that to the authors* of this tragedy is due the earliest employment of blank verse—an advance which was to prove vital for the future.

In 1587 appeared a tragedy based on the story of King Arthur; it was also in blank verse, known as the *Misfortunes of Arthur*, and written by Thomas Hughes.

Nearly half a century before, a new type of play had come into being—the *Chronicle* play. At a time when historical writings were commonly known as chronicles, it was natural that historical dramas should have been called Chronicle plays.

The truth was, the English people had advanced rapidly from a position of comparatively small importance in continental affairs to a nation whose friendship was eagerly sought. There was a general desire to know more of the rounds by which they did ascend and a series of histories were presently forthcoming to meet this demand. Raphael Holinshed published his famous *Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland* in 1577, which was to serve Shakespeare and his contemporaries so frequently as they cast about for dramatic episodes in English history which would be suited for the stage.

It is now well-nigh a hundred years since the old play *Kynge Johan* came to light, having been lost to view for three centuries. Its authorship has been disputed although it is generally attributed to one Bishop Bale. It has many points in common with the political moralities which still continued to be written when this was presumably produced, somewhere in the later years of Henry VIII's reign or possibly under Edward VI. It expresses a feeling, prevalent at the time, resentful of outside interference. It deals with the period of John's reign when an interdict had been placed over England. Nothing whatever is said of the

Magna Carta nor would we recognize King John as a tyrant from whom determined Englishmen wrested rights for themselves and posterity. Instead, he appears, states his hereditary rights and his intention to rule his country well. A widow, Ynglond (England) beseeches him to protect her from oppressors. Sedition assumes a rôle comparable to that of Vice in the earlier moralities; Nobilyte, Clargy and Syvill Order represent the three social classes; Pryvat Welth, and Usurpyd Power all play their parts. The Explainer gives sufficiently the scope of the drama:

“In this present act we have to you declared
As in a mirror, the beginning of King John,
How he was of God a magistrate appointed
To the governance of this same noble region;
To see maintained the true faith and religion;
But Satan the Devil, which that time was at large,
Had so great a sway that he could not it discharge.

Upon good zeal he attempted very far
For wealth of this realm to provide reformation
In the Church thereof, but they did him debar
Of that good purpose; for by excommunication
The space of seven years they interdict this nation.
These bloudsuppers thus of cruelty and spite
Subdued this good king for executing right.

In the second act will appear more plain
Wherein Pandulphus shall him excommunicate
Within this his land, and depose him from his reign.
All other princes they shall move him to hate,
And to persecute after a most cruel rate.
They will him poison in their malignity
And cause ill report of him always to be.

This noble King John, as a faithful Moses
Withstood proud Pharaoh for his poor Israel,
Minding to bring it out of the land of darkness,
But the Egyptians did against him so rebel
That his poor people did still in the desert dwell,
Till that duke Joshua, which was our late Keng Henry,
Clearly brought us out into lands of milk and honey.

In the play John dies a martyr to his beloved land, submerged by forces that were too powerful for him. Thus it is plain that there was no effort made to adhere to history but it was regarded as legitimate material to be shaped to the momentary purpose of the writer, who employed the stage to publish his propaganda.

It is, safe to say that these first English comedies and tragedies are perused today only by those who would seek out the successive links of dramatic development. Even were they to be set into modern spelling with each obsolete phrase given adequate interpretation, few, if any, would read them extensively for sheer enjoyment. Yet only by giving them due credit shall we be able to understand how drama was gradually moulded into something fine and forceful, ready for the great masters of the late Elizabethan period. As a critic has well pointed out, the time is passed when that mighty age of drama can be treated as it was once—as if, in the darkness a voice had said: “Let there be Shakespeare: and there was Shakespeare!”

Born of religion in the tenth century, drama advanced in each succeeding hundred years until the firm foundations which had been almost imperceptibly laid were ready for the monumental structure.

Plays were presented in a variety of ways during the sixteenth century, before the rise of theatres. Schools had long employed this manner of entertainment for the diversion of distinguished guests. The Grammar schools ordinarily presented them in English, the Universities in Latin. As head schoolmaster at Eton and later Westminster, Udall had considerable training in arranging plays for the use of his students; while during the years in which he had charge of the Queen's Revels, he gained wide experience in dramatic presentations of a more elaborate nature.

Due to royal patronage, drama was given much encouragement under the Tudors, without which it must have had a hard struggle to survive. Not only was a small company organized under Henry VII to render Court entertainment but the boys of the Royal Chapel and the choir boys of St. Paul's repeatedly gave plays. Further, gentlemen of the

Temple, in London, were unstinting in their support of plays and frequently presented them. Last, but not least, there had come into being wandering companies, forced by the laws of the realm to seek the protection of some nobleman. Their obligation to him held them at his residence part of the time; otherwise they strolled about, deriving such a precarious livelihood as they were able. Christmas and other holidays found them in or around London; at other times they journeyed here and there, always springing up where crowds gathered, eager to present their limited repertoire. They carried their meagre and tawdry properties and costumes around with them. The stage directions appended to many an old play testify to the resourcefulness of the actor. In the play of *King John*, for example, by the part of *Ynglond*, the widow personifying the realm, the old manuscript bears the note: "Exit Ynglond and dress for Clargy."

^aHenry IV, Part I, Act II, sc. 4.

^{*}Sackville and Norton. In their use of blank verse they were influenced by Virgil's *Æneid*, which had recently been done into English.

PRE-SHAKESPEAREAN PLAYWRIGHTS

1. JOHN LYLY

A FEW years ago a dramatic critic applied the term *University Wits** to a group of playwrights who preceded Shakespeare and who are known to have influenced him to a greater or less degree. The expression is fairly apt, since most of them studied, for a while at least, either at Oxford or Cambridge. Since the plays that held the boards for some years were produced by college trained men, weight was given to an impression, which they were quick to encourage, that only those of extended learning were fitted to engage in literary pursuits, scorn and invectives being promptly meted out to any outside the circle of university men who essayed to enter the world of letters. Such an attitude confronted Shakespeare when he went to London, gradually to disappear before his unparalleled success.

Of the several "Wits" whose writings must be considered in order to estimate aright the efforts of those who followed, John Lyly comes first in point of chronology. It is possible to point to lines and situations in Shakespeare's plays which were suggested by his earlier comedies.

Lyly,* whose name is spelled in a variety of ways by his contemporaries, has been the subject of many a scholarly dispute, for few facts are actually known of his personal life. He speaks of having been born during the reign of Queen Mary, whether in 1553, 1554 or 1555 is uncertain, some authorities accepting one, some other dates. He is mentioned as already dead in 1606. He is known to have taken his Master's degree at Oxford in 1575 and four years later, to have had the same degree conferred upon him at Cambridge.

He came into public notice at the close of 1578 when his epoch-making *Euphues* was published, a second portion appearing the following year. This romance was written in a highly elaborate and artificial style, known from its title

as *euphuism*. Alliteration abounded, one antithesis was set over against another, simile followed simile. While much has been written latterly to show that this affected flow of language did not originate with Lyly but was discovered by him in a work translated in elaborate sentences from the Spanish, the fact remains that he expanded upon models that he found ready at hand and made the style popular. For awhile the English Court and the erudite Queen herself affected this manner of speech. Greene and Lodge, among others, employed it in their writings. For some time it influenced cultivated expression in refined circles. In the end it disappeared, like all artificialities.

We are not here concerned with Lyly as a novelist but as a playwright. His early plays can be distinguished by the obtrusion of euphuism into them; later he dropped the style, which was largely avoided in his last comedies.

The great ambition of the poet's life was to become Master of the Revels at the Court of Elizabeth but, like Spenser, he was doomed to bitter disappointment. Two petitions addressed by him to the Queen state that he had waited, first ten, then thirteen years, for an appointment which he felt he had been encouraged by her to expect. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that she rewarded him with more than passing favor. It is probable that his eight plays were presented before her by the child companies of St. Paul's and the Chapel Royal. The dissolution of the boys of Paul's as an acting company is attributed by some critics to possible displeasure which the Queen may have shown as a result of daring lines included in one of Lyle's comedies. Be that as it may, it is certain that the last years of his life were shadowed by regrets and disillusionment. Fame, which had well-nigh turned his head at the outset of his career, terminated in an eclipse, for others held the public mind before his death, which occurred when he was scarcely more than fifty years of age.

The exact dates of the original performances of Lyly's eight comedies, like those of events in his own life, are debated. *Alexander and Campaspe* was based on a historical tradition that the great Macedonian conqueror became infatuated with one Campaspe, a Theban captive. He com-

manded Apelles to paint her portrait and her beauty caused the artist to fall in love with her. Alexander, learning of this, yielded to the painter, saying that he would court Glory as his mistress in his wars. The famous meeting of Alexander and Diogenes is brought into the play, the philosopher's dry wit supplying sparkle and leaven to the comedy.

Alex. In the mean time, to recreate my spirits, being so near, we will go see Diogenes. And see where his tub is. Diogenes!

Diog. Who called?

Alex. Alexander. How happened it that you would not come out of your tub to my palace?

Diog. Because it was as far from my tub to your palace as from your palace to my tub.

Alex. Why, then, dost thou no reverence to kings?

Diog. No.

Alex. Why so?

Diog. Because they be no gods.

Alex. They be gods of the earth.

Diog. Yea, gods of earth.

Alex. Plato is not of thy mind.

Diog. I am glad of it.

Alex. Why?

Diog. Because I would have none of Diogenes mind but Diogeneses.

Alex. If Alexander have anything that may pleasure Diogenes, let me know, and take it.

Diog. Then take not from me that you cannot give me—the light of the world.

Alex. What dost thou want?

Diog. Nothing that you have.

Alex. I have the world at command.

Diog. And I in contempt.

Alex. Thou shalt live no longer than I will.

Diog. And I shall die whether you will or not.

Alex. How should one learn to be content?

Diog. Unlearn to covet.

Alex. Hephestion, were I not Alexander, I would wish to be Diogenes!¹

And again:

Alex. Behold, Diogenes is talking with one at his tub.

Cry. One penny, Diogenes; I am a Cynic.

Diog. He made thee a beggar that first gave thee anything.

- Cry.* Why, if thou wilt give nothing, nobody will give thee.
Diog. I want nothing till the springs dry and the earth perish.
Cry. I gather for the gods.
Diog. And I care not for those gods which want money.
Cry. Thou art not a right Cynic that wilt give nothing.
Diog. Thou art not, that will beg anything.
Cry. [*Crossing to Alexander.*] Alexander! King Alexander! Give a poor Cynic a groat.
Alex. It is not for a king to give a groat.
Cry. Then give me a talent.
Alex. It is not for a beggar to ask a talent. Away!²

The title page of this comedy bore the legend: "Played before her Majesty on Twelfth Night by her Majesty's Children and the Children of Paul's." It is believed that this performance took place in 1581.

Several of Lyly's comedies were allegories, the true meaning being veiled in a manner already made familiar in the old Moralities as well as by poets from the time of William Morris. *Midas*, for example, satirized Philip II of Spain, under guise of the old mythical King; *Endymion* is believed to have symbolized the love affair of the Earl of Leicester with the Queen. *Sapho and Phao* probably had its conception in the visit and departure of Alençon, brother of the French king, who was openly a suitor for Elizabeth's hand. *Mother Bombie*, the only play which did not garb itself in some historical or legendary guise, gave prominence to the skill of a fortune teller, while the plot turned on mistaken identity, a device adopted later by Shakespeare in his *Comedy of Errors*. *Gallathea* is a pastoral comedy; while Lyly's debt to Ovid, not infrequently revealed, is most apparent in *Love's Metamorphosis*. The *Woman in the Moon* was done in blank verse; the other plays in prose. This last is the comedy surmised to have given offence to Queen Elizabeth, her keen penetration detecting all personal allusions, regardless of skilful concealment.

For many reasons *Endymion* is interesting to the modern reader. The charming story of mythology has appealed to poets and artists in all ages—the youth enamoured of the goddess of the moon; for his audacity, com-

pelled to choose between death and perpetual sleep, this to be accompanied by perpetual youth; the youth still sleeping in a cave where moonbeams fall upon him nightly, caressed by the tender Luna—this beautiful conception fired the soul of Keats and became the subject of one of his finest poems.

It was to no such purpose that Lyly hit upon the ancient theme. Instead, he found in it a convenient guise for treating a political situation which had been an open secret not long before and which none would have dared to treat more plainly. Endymion personifies the Earl of Leicester; Cynthia, the Queen herself. Leicester's aspirations for the Queen's hand, her evident preference for him, the suspicious conditions under which Amy Robsart, his first wife, fell to her death, the general unwillingness on the part of nobles to see one among them exalted to the position of Royal Consort—all these details have become common knowledge. At length, persuaded that he waited in vain, the Earl secretly married the Countess of Essex, who had been madly in love with him for some time. So great was Leicester's influence at Court that he was able to keep knowledge of his marriage from the Queen, until the French Ambassador, eager to advance the cause of the French prince, advised her of it. Elizabeth's anger was intense, The Earl was forbidden to leave his castle and only the sane counsel of Lord Burleigh prevented her from committing him to the Tower. Not for a year was he restored to favor, and even after the Queen admitted him once more to political activity, his wife was not received at Court.

An English clergyman in 1843 first advanced the idea that Lyly's *Endymion* treated allegorically of this incident. Although arguments have been made for and against the interpretation, it is now generally accepted by critics. Endymion's profound sleep, brought about in the comedy, by the witch, is supposed to symbolize the eclipse Leicester experienced when his marriage became known to the Queen, causing her to visit her displeasure upon him; the awakening and restoration to youth relate to his joy at being restored to royal favor. Tullus is understood by some to represent the Countess of Essex and similarly in the minds

of some every character in the play has its sixteenth century equivalent, although this extreme view is rejected by others who are content to identify the principal characters. With the key to the story being given, the comedy becomes additionally enjoyable.

“In reading it, we must picture to our mind a large, low room in the palace of Greenwich. The time is ‘New Year’s Day at night.’ The actors are the ‘children of Paul’s.’ Elizabeth in all her bravery of ruffs and farthingales, with chains and orders round her neck, and the sharp smile on her mouth, is seated beneath a canopy of state. Lords, ladies, and ambassadors watch her face, as courtiers watch a queen. On the stage lies no Hellenic shepherd in the bloom of youth, but a boy attired in sylvan style to represent an aged man with flowing beard. Cynthia—not the solitary maiden goddess, led by Cupid, wafting her long raiment to the breeze of night; but a queen among her ladies, a boy disguised to personate Elizabeth herself—bends over him. And Endymion’s dream, when he awakes, has been no fair romance of love revealed in slumber, but a vision of treason, envy, ingratitude, assassination, threatening his sovereign.”³

Several of Lyly’s plays still afford pleasurable reading, the more if one has in mind parallels which are bound to suggest themselves with certain of Shakespeare’s dramas.

That later playwrights owed much to Lyly there is no question. Although not the first to use prose in plays, he was one of the first to write sparkling dialogue in it. On the other hand, his characters are abstractions rather than people as we know them. Shakespeare’s fine character delineation often made him inattentive to plot. His characters, like those of Dickens, people an imaginary world, which is almost as real to us as the populated plane on which we dwell. It is not possible to make companions of Lyly’s characters for we do not become acquainted with them. What they *do* is not evolved from what they *are*.

Because Lyly worked with the Children’s companies, made up of boy choristers, he introduced many charming lyrics into his plays, trained voices being at hand to render them. This plan was adopted by other Elizabethan drama-

tists, notably Shakespeare, who is believed to have found his inspiration for one of the most beautiful of them all—

“Hark, hark the lark at heaven’s gate sings,
And Phœbus ’gins arise—”¹

from the following, set into the fifth Act of *Alexander and Campaspe*:

“What bird so sings, yet so does wail?
Oh, ’tis the ravished nightingale!
Jug, jug, jug, jug, tereu, she cries;
And still her woes at midnight rise.
Brave prick-song! Who is’t now we hear?
None but the lark, so shrill and clear;
How at heaven’s gates she clasps her wings,
The morn not waking till she sings!
Hark, hark, with what a pretty throat
Poor robin red-breast tunes his note!
Hark how the jolly cuckoos sing
Cuckoo, to welcome in the spring—
Cuckoo, to welcome in the spring!”

Thus may we again say, with Ward: “When we delight in the flow of wit, the flash of repartee, and the dialectical brilliancy of some of the most famous comic scenes in Shakespeare, Ben Jonson and Fletcher, we should not forget that the path trodden by them had been opened by the writer whom they ‘so much outshone.’ ”²

In characterizing Lyly’s part as an innovator Symonds wrote: “Lyly was emphatically a discoverer. He discovered euphuism, and created a fashionable affectation, which ran its course of more than twenty years. He discovered the dialogue of repartee in witty prose. He discovered the ambiguity of the sexes, as a motive of dramatic curiosity. He discovered what effective use might be made of the occasional lyric, as an adjunct to dramatic action. He discovered the Drama which gave rise to the Courtly or Romantic Comedy.”³

¹ Act II, Scene I.

² Act III, Scene III.

³ Symonds: *Shakespeare’s Predecessors*, p. 426.

⁴ Ward: *English Dramatic Literature*, Vol. I, p. 283.

⁵ Symonds: *Shakespeare’s Predecessors*, p. 426.

* Prof. Saintsbury.

[†] Also spelled Lille, Lilly, and various other ways.

[‡] Cymbeline.

ENDYMION

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

ENDYMION, *in love with Cynthia.*

EUMENIDES, *friend of Endymion; in love with Semele.*

CORSITES, *a captain in Cynthia's army; in love with Tellus.*

GERON, *an old man, husband to Dipsas.*

PANELION }
ZONTES } *Lords of Cynthia's Court.*

PYTHAGORAS, *the Grecian Philosopher.*

GYPTES, *an Egyptian Soothsayer.*

SIR THOPAS, *a Braggart.*

SAMIAS, *page to Endymion.*

DARES, *page to Eumenides.*

EPTION, *Page to Sir Tophas.*

MASTER CONSTABLE.

FIRST WATCHMAN.

SECOND WATCHMAN.

CYNTHIA, *ruler of the land.*

TELLUS, *in love with Endymion.*

FLOSCULA, *friend of Tellus and Endymion.*

SEMELE, *loved by Eumenides.*

SCINTILLA }
FAVILIA } *Waiting-maids; friends of Samias and Dares.*

DIPSAS, *an Enchantress.*

BAGOA, *servant of Dipsas.*

Fairies; Three Ladies and an Old Man in the Dumb Show.

THE PROLOGUE

Most high and happy Princess, we must tell you a tale of the Man in the Moon; which, if it seem ridiculous for the method, or superfluous for the matter, or for the means incredible, for three faults we can make but one excuse—it is a tale of the Man in the Moon.

It was forbidden in old time to dispute of Chimæra because it was a fiction; we hope in our times none will apply pastimes, because they are fancies; for there liveth none under the sun that know what to make of the Man in the Moon. We present neither comedy, nor tragedy, nor story, nor anything but that whosoever heareth may say this: Why, here is a tale of the Man in the Moon.

ENDYMION

ACT THE FIRST

SCENE I

Enter ENDYMION and EUMENIDES

End. I find, Eumenides, in all things both variety to content, and satiety to glut, saving only in my affections, which are so staid, and withal so stately, that I can neither satisfy my heart with love, nor mine eyes with wonder. My thoughts, Eumenides, are stitched to the stars, which being as high as I can see, thou mayest imagine how much higher they are than I can reach.

Eum. If you be enamoured of anything above the moon, your thoughts are ridiculous, for that things immortal are not subject to affections; if allured or enchanted with these transitory things under the moon, you show yourself senseless, to attribute such lofty titles to such love-trifles.

End. My love is placed neither under the moon nor above.

Eum. I hope you be not sotted upon the Man in the Moon.

End. No; but settled either to die or possess the moon herself.

Eum. Is Endymion mad, or do I mistake? Do you love the moon, Endymion?

End. Eumenides, the moon.

Eum. There was never any so peevish to imagine the moon either capable of affection or shape of a mistress; for as impossible it is to make love fit to her humour, which no man knoweth, as a coat to her form, which continueth not in one bigness whilst she is measuring. Cease off, Endymion, to feed so much upon fancies. That melancholy blood must be purged which draweth you to a dotage no less miserable than monstrous.

End. My thoughts have no veins, and yet unless they be let blood, I shall perish.

Eum. But they have vanities, which being reformed, you may be restored.

End. O, fair Cynthia, why do others term thee inconstant whom I have ever found immovable? Injurious time, corrupt manners, unkind men, who, finding a constancy not to be matched in my sweet mistress, have christened her with the name of wavering, waxing, and waning! Is she incon-

stant that keepeth a settled course; which, since her first creation, altereth not one minute in her moving? There is nothing thought more admirable or commendable in the sea than the ebbing and flowing; and shall the moon, from whom the sea taketh this virtue, be accounted fickle for increasing and decreasing? Flowers in their buds are nothing worth till they be blown, nor are blossoms accounted till they be ripe fruit; and shall we then say they be changeable for that they grow from seeds to leaves, from leaves to buds, from buds to their perfection? Then, why be not twigs that become trees, children that become men, and mornings that grow to evenings, termed wavering, for that they continue not at one stay? Ay, but Cynthia, being in her fullness, decayeth, as not delighting in her greatest beauty, or withering when she should be most honored. When malice cannot object anything, folly will, making that a vice which is the greatest virtue. What thing (my mistress excepted), being in the pride of her beauty and latter minute of her age, that waxeth young again? Tell me, Eumenides, what is he that having a mistress of ripe years and infinite virtues, great honors and unspeakable beauty, but would wish that she might grow tender again, getting youth by years, and never-decaying beauty by time; whose fair face neither the summer's blaze can scorch, nor winter's blast chap, nor the numbering of years breed altering of colors? Such is my sweet Cynthia, whom time cannot touch because she is divine, nor will offend because she is delicate. O Cynthia, if thou shouldst always continue at thy fullness, both gods and men would conspire to ravish thee. But thou, to abate the pride of our affections, dost detract from thy perfections, thinking it sufficient if once in a month we enjoy a glimpse of thy majesty; and then, to increase our griefs, thou dost decrease thy gleams, coming out of thy royal robes, wherewith thou dazzlest our eyes, down into thy swathe clouts [swaddling-clothes] beguiling our eyes; and then—

Eum. Stay there, Endymion; thou that committest idolatry, wilt straight blaspheme, if thou be suffered. Sleep would do thee more good than speech: the moon heareth thee not, or if she do, regardeth thee not.

End. Vain Eumenides, whose thoughts never grow higher than the crown of thy head! Why troublest thou me, having

neither head to conceive the cause of my love nor heart to receive the impressions? Follow thou thine own fortunes, which creep on the earth, and suffer me to fly to mine, whose fall, though it be desperate, yet shall it come by daring—— Farewell. [Exit.]

Eum. Without doubt Endymion is bewitched; otherwise in a man of such rare virtues there could not harbour a mind of such extreme madness. I will follow him, lest in this fancy of the moon he deprive himself of the sight of the sun.

SCENE II

Enter TELLUS and FLOSCULA.

Tellus. Treacherous and most perjured Endymion, is Cynthia the sweetness of thy life and the bitterness of my death? What revenge may be devised so full of shame as my thoughts are replenished with malice? Tell me, Floscula, if falseness in love can possibly be punished with extremity of hate? As long as sword, fire, or poison may be hired, no traitor to my love shall live unrevengeed. Were thy oaths without number, thy kisses without measure, thy sighs without end, forged to deceive a poor credulous virgin whose simplicity had been worth thy favor and better fortune? If the gods sit unequal beholders of injuries, or laughers at lovers' deceits, then let mischief be as well forgiven in women as perjury winked at in men.

Flosc. Madam, if you would compare the state of Cynthia with your own, and the height of Endymion's thoughts with the meanness of your fortune, you would rather yield than contend (there) being between you and her no comparison; and rather wonder than rage at the greatness of his mind, being affected with a thing more than mortal.

Tellus. No comparison, Floscula? And why so? Is not my beauty divine, whose body is decked with fair flowers, and veins are vines, yielding sweet liquor to the dullest spirits; whose ears are corn, to bring strength; and whose hairs are grass, to bring abundance? Doth not frankincense and myrrh breathe out of my nostrils, and all the sacrifice of the gods breed in my bowels? Infinite are my creatures, without which neither thou, nor Endymion, nor any, could love or live.

Flosc. But know you not, fair lady, that Cynthia governeth all things? Your grapes would be but dry husks, your corn

but chaff, and all your virtues vain, were it not Cynthia that preserveth the one in the bud and nourisheth the other in the blade, and by her influence both comforteth all things, and by her authority commandeth all creatures; suffer, then, Endymion to follow his affections, though to obtain her be impossible, and let him flatter himself in his own imaginations, because they are immortal.

Tellus. Loath I am, Endymion, thou shouldst die, because I love thee well; and that thou shouldst live, it grieveth me, because thou lovest Cynthia too well. In these extremities, what shall I do? Floscula, no more words; I am resolved. He shall neither live nor die.

Flosc. A strange practice, if it be possible.

Tellus. Yes, I will entangle him in such a sweet net that he shall neither find the means to come out, nor desire it. All allurements of pleasure will I cast before his eyes, inso-much that he shall slake that love which he now voweth to Cynthia, and burn in mine, of which he seemeth careless. In this languishing, between my amorous devices and his own loose desires, there shall such dissolute thoughts take root in his head, and over his heart grow so thick a skin, that neither hope of preferment, nor fear of punishment, nor counsel of the wisest, nor company of the worthiest, shall alter his humor, nor make him once to think of his honor.

Flosc. A revenge incredible, and if it may be, unnatural.

Tellus. He shall know the malice of a woman to have neither mean nor end; and of a woman deluded in love to have neither rule nor reason. I can do it; I must; I will! All his virtues will I shadow with vices; his person (ah, sweet person!) shall he deck with such rich robes as he shall forget it is his own person; his sharp wit (ah, wit too sharp that hath cut off all my joys!) shall he use in flattering of my face and devising sonnets in my favor. The prime of his youth and pride of his time shall be spent in melancholy passions, careless behavior, untamed thoughts, and unbridled affections.

Flosc. When this is done, what then? Shall it continue till his death, or shall he dote forever in this delight?

Tellus. Ah, Floscula, thou rendest my heart in sunder in putting me in remembrance of the end.

Flosc. Why, if this be not the end, all the rest is to no end.

Tellus. Yet suffer me to imitate Juno, who would turn Jupiter's lovers to beasts on the earth, though she knew afterwards they should be stars in heaven.

Flosc. Affection that is bred by enchantment is like a flower that is wrought in silk,—in color and form most like, but nothing at all in substance or savor.

Tellus. It shall suffice me if the world talk that I am favored of Endymion.

Flosc. Well, use your own will; but you shall find that love gotten with witchcraft is as unpleasant as fish taken with medicines unwholesome.

Tellus. Floscula, they that be so poor that they have neither net nor hook will rather poison dough than pine with hunger; and she that is so oppressed with love that she is neither able with beauty nor wit to obtain her friend, will rather use unlawful means than try intolerable pains. I will do it. [Exit.

Flosc. Then about it. Poor Endymion, what traps are laid for thee because thou honorest one that all the world wondereth at! And what plots are cast to make thee unfortunate that studieth of all men to be the faithfulest.

[Exit.

* * * *

ACT THE SECOND

SCENE I

Enter ENDYMION

End. O fair Cynthia! O unfortunate Endymion! Why was not thy birth as high as thy thoughts, or her beauty less than heavenly; or why are not thine honors as rare as her beauty, or thy fortunes as great as thy deserts? Sweet Cynthia, how wouldst thou be pleased, how possessed? Will labors, patient of all extremities, obtain thy love? There is no mountain so steep that I will not climb, no monster so cruel that I will not tame, no action so desperate that I will not attempt. Desirest thou the passions of love, the sad and melancholy moods of perplexed minds, the not-to-be-expressed torments of racked thoughts? Behold my sad tears, my deep sighs, my hollow eyes, my broken sleeps, my heavy countenance. Wouldst thou have me vowed only to thy beauty and consume every minute of time in thy service? Remember my solitary life almost

these seven years. Whom have I entertained but mine own thoughts and thy virtues? What company have I used but contemplation? Whom have I wondered at but thee? Nay, whom have I not contemned for thee? Have I not crept to those on whom I might have trodden, only because thou didst shine upon them? Have not injuries been sweet to me, if thou vouchsafedst I should bear them? Have I not spent my golden years in hopes, waxing old with wishing, yet wishing nothing but thy love? With Tellus, fair Tellus, have I dissembled, using her but as a cloak for mine affections, that others, seeing my mangled and disordered mind, might think it were for one that loveth me, not for Cynthia, whose perfection alloweth no companion nor comparison. In the midst of these distempered thoughts of mine thou art not only jealous of my truth, but careless, suspicious, and secure; which strange humor maketh my mind as desperate as thy conceits are doubtful. I am none of those wolves that bark most when thou shinest brightest, but that fish (thy fish, Cynthia, in the flood Araris) which at thy waxing is as white as the driven snow, and at thy waning as black as deepest darkness. I am that Endymion, sweet Cynthia, that have carried my thoughts in equal balance with my actions, being always as free from imagining ill as enterprising; that Endymion whose eyes never esteemed anything fair but thy face, whose tongue termed nothing rare but thy virtues, and whose heart imagined nothing miraculous but thy government; yea, that Endymion, who, divorcing himself from the amiableness of all ladies, the bravery of all courts, the company of all men, hath chosen in a solitary cell to live, only by feeding on thy favor, accounting in the world—but thyself—nothing excellent, nothing immortal: thus mayest thou see every vein, sinew, muscle, and artery of my love, in which there is no flattery, nor deceit, error, nor art. But soft, here cometh Tellus. I must turn my other face to her, like Janus, lest she be as suspicious as Juno.

Enter TELLUS, FLOSCULA and DIPSAS

Tellus. Yonder I espy Endymion. I will seem to suspect nothing, but soothe him, that seeing I cannot obtain the depth of his love, I may learn the height of his dissembling. Floscula and Dipsas, withdraw yourselves out of our sight, yet be within the hearing of our saluting. [*FLOSCULA and*

DIPSAS *withdraw*. TELLUS *comes forward*.] How now, Endymion, always solitary? No company but your own thoughts, no friend but melancholy fancies?

End. You know, fair Tellus, that the sweet remembrance of your love is the only companion of my life, and thy presence, my paradise; so that I am not alone when nobody is with me, and in heaven itself when thou art with me.

Tellus. Then you love me, Endymion?

End. Or else I live not, Tellus.

Tellus. Is it not possible for you, Endymion, to dissemble?

End. Not, Tellus, unless I could make me a woman.

Tellus. Why, is dissembling joined to their sex inseparable, as heat to fire, heaviness to earth, moisture to water, thinness to air?

End. No, but found in their sex as common as spots upon doves, moles upon faces, caterpillars upon sweet apples, cobwebs upon fair windows.

Tellus. Do they all dissemble?

End. All but one.

Tellus. Who is that?

End. I dare not tell; for if I should say you, then would you imagine my flattery to be extreme; if another, then would you think my love to be but indifferent.

Tellus. You will be sure I shall take no vantage of your words. But in sooth, Endymion, without more ceremonies, is it not Cynthia?

End. You know, Tellus, that of the gods we are forbidden to dispute, because their deities come not within the compass of our reasons; and of Cynthia we are allowed not to talk but to wonder, because her virtues are not within the reach of our capacities.

Tellus. Why, she is but a woman.

End. No more was Venus.

Tellus. She is but a virgin.

End. No more was Vesta.

Tellus. She shall have an end.

End. So shall the world.

Tellus. Is not her beauty subject to time?

End. No more than time is to standing still.

Tellus. Wilt thou make her immortal?

End. No, but incomparable.

Tellus. Take heed, Endymion, lest like the wrestler in Olympia, that striving to lift an impossible weight caught an incur-

able strain, thou, by fixing thy thoughts above thy reach, fall into a disease without all recure. But I see thou are now in love with Cynthia.

End. No, Tellus, thou knowest that the stately cedar, whose top reacheth into the clouds, never boweth his head to the shrubs that grow in the valley; nor ivy, that climbeth up by the elm, can ever get hold of the beams of the sun: Cynthia I honor in all humility, whom none ought or dare adventure to love, whose affections are immortal, and virtues infinite. Suffer me, therefore, to gaze on the moon, at whom, were it not for thyself, I would die with wondering.

[*Exeunt ENDYMION and TELLUS.*]

* * * * *

ACT THE THIRD

SCENE I

Enter CYNTHIA, EUMENIDES, TELLUS, SEMELE, CORSITES, PANELION, and ZONTES.

Cynth. Is the report true, that Endymion is stricken into such a dead sleep that nothing can either wake him or move him?

Eum. Too true, madam, and as much to be pitied as wondered at.

Tellus. As good sleep and do no harm as wake and do no good.

Cynth. What maketh you, Tellus, to be so short? The time was Endymion only was (considered).

Eum. It is an old saying, madam, that a waking dog doth afar off bark at a sleeping lion.

Sem. It were good, Eumenides, that you took a nap with your friend, for your speech beginneth to be heavy.

Eum. Contrary to your nature, Semele, which hath been always accounted light.

Cynth. What, have we here before my face these unseemly and malapert overthwarts! I will tame your tongues and your thoughts, and make your speeches answerable to your duties, and your conceits fit for my dignity, else will I banish you both my person and the world.

Eum. Pardon I humbly ask; but such is my unspotted faith to Endymion that whatsoever seemeth a needle to prick his finger is a dagger to wound my heart.

Cynth. If you be so dear to him, how happeneth it you neither go to see him, nor search for remedy for him?

Eum. I have seen him to my grief, and sought recure with despair, for that I cannot imagine who should restore him that is the wonder to all men. Your Highness, on whose hands the compass of the earth is at command, though not in possession, may show yourself both worthy your sex, your nature, and your favor, if you redeem that honorable Endymion, whose ripe years foretell rare virtues, and whose unmellowed conceits promise ripe counsel.

Cynth. I have had trial of Endymion, and conceive greater assurance of his age than I could hope of his youth.

Tellus. But timely, madam, crooks that tree that will be a cammock, and young it pricks that will be a thorn; and therefore he that began without care to settle his life, it is a sign without amendment he will end it.

Cynth. Presumptuous girl, I will make thy tongue an example of unrecoverable displeasure.

Corsites, carry her to the castle in the desert, there to remain and weave.

Cors. Shall she work stories or poetries?

Cynth. It skilleth not witch. Go to, in both; for she shall find examples infinite in either what punishment long tongues have. Eumenides, if either the soothsayers in Egypt, or the enchanters in Thessaly, or the philosophers in Greece, or all the sages of the world, can find remedy, I will procure it; therefore, dispatch with all speed: you, Eumenides, into Thessaly; you, Zontes, into Greece, because you are acquainted in Athens; you, Panelion, to Egypt; saying that Cynthia sendeth, and if you will, commandeth.

Eum. On bowed knee I give thanks, and with wings on my legs, I fly for remedy.

Zon. We are ready at Your Highness' command, and hope to return to your full content.

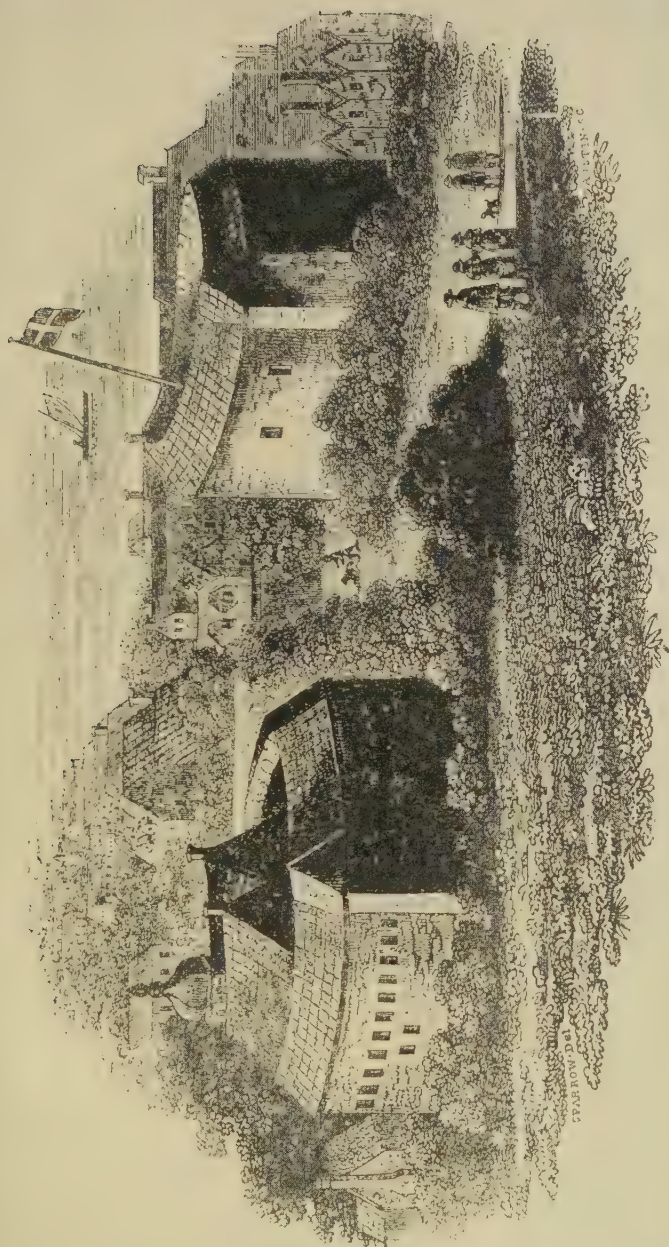
Cynth. It shall never be said that Cynthia, whose mercy and goodness filleth the heavens with joys and the world with marvel, will suffer either Endymion or any to perish, if he may be protected.

Eum. Your Majesty's words have been always deeds, and your deeds virtues. [*Exeunt all.*]

SCENE II

Enter CORSITES and TELLUS

Cors. Here is the castle, fair Tellus, in which you must weave, till either time end your days, or Cynthia her displeasure.



THE GLOBE THEATER

I am sorry so fair a face should be subject to so hard a fortune, and that the flower of beauty, which is honored in courts, should here wither in prison.

Tellus. Corsites, Cynthia may restrain the liberty of my body, of my thoughts she cannot; and therefore do I esteem myself most free, though I am in greatest bondage.

Cors. Can you then feed on fancy, and subdue the malice of envy by the sweetness of imagination?

Tellus. Corsites, there is no sweeter music to the miserable than despair; and therefore the more bitterness I feel, the more sweetness I find; for so vain were liberty, and so unwelcome the following of higher fortune, that I choose rather to pine in this castle than to be a prince in any other court.

Cors. A humor contrary to your years and nothing agreeable to your sex: the one commonly allured with delights, the other always with sovereignty.

Tellus. I marvel, Corsites, that you being a captain, who should sound nothing but terror and suck nothing but blood, can find in your heart to talk such smooth words, for that it agreeth not with your calling to use words so soft as that of love.

Cors. Lady, it were unfit of wars to discourse with women, into whose minds nothing can sink but smoothness; besides, you must not think that soldiers be so rough-hewn, or of such knotty mettle, that beauty cannot allure, and you, being beyond perfection, enchant.

Tellus. Good Corsites, talk not of love, but let me to my labor; the little beauty I have shall be bestowed on my loom, which I now mean to make my lover.

Cors. Let us in, and what favor Corsites can show, Tellus shall command.

Tellus. The only favor I desire is now and then to walk.

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SCENE IV

Enter EUMENIDES and GERON

Eum. Father, your sad music being tuned on the same key that my hard fortune is, hath so melted my mind that I wish to hang at your mouth's end till life end.

Ger. These tunes, gentleman, have I been accustomed with these fifty winters, having no other house to shroud myself but

the broad heavens; and so familiar with me hath use made misery that I esteem sorrow by chiefest solace, and welcomest is that guest to me that can rehearse the saddest tale or the bloodiest tragedy.

Eum. A strange humor. Might I inquire the cause?

Ger. You must pardon me if I deny to tell it, for knowing that the revealing of grief is, as it were, a renewing of sorrow, I have vowed therefore to conceal them, that I might not only feel the depth of everlasting discontentment, but despair of remedy. But whence are you? What fortune hath thrust you to this distress?

Eum. I am going to Thessaly, to seek remedy for Endymion, my dearest friend, who hath been cast into a dead sleep almost these twenty years, waxing old and ready for the grave, being almost but newly come forth of the cradle.

Ger. You need not for recure travel far, for whoso can clearly see the bottom of this fountain shall have remedy for anything.

Eum. That methinketh is impossible. Why, what virtue can there be in water?

Ger. Yes, whosoever can shed the tears of a faithful lover shall obtain anything he would. Read these words engraven about the brim.

Eum. Have you known this by experience, or is it placed here of purpose to delude men?

Ger. I only would have experience of it, and then should there be an end of my misery; and then would I tell the strangest discourse that ever yet was heard.

Eum. Ah, Eumenides!

Ger. What lack you, gentleman; are you not well?

Eum. Yes, father, but a qualm that often cometh over my heart doth now take hold of me. But did never any lovers come hither?

Ger. Lusters, but not lovers; for often have I seen them weep, but never could I hear they saw the bottom.

Eum. Came there women also?

Ger. Some.

Eum. What did they see?

Ger. They all wept, that the fountain overflowed with tears, but so thick became the water with their tears that I could scarce discern the brim, much less behold the bottom.

Eum. Be faithful lovers so scant?

Ger. It seemeth so, for yet heard I never of any.

Eum. Ah, Eumenides, how art thou perplexed! Call to mind the beauty of thy sweet mistress and the depth of thy never-dying affections: how oft hast thou honored her, not only without spot, but suspicion of falsehood! And how hardly hath she rewarded thee without cause or color of despite. How secret hast thou been these seven years, that hast not, nor once darest not to name her, for discontenting her. How faithful that hath offered to die for her, to please her! Unhappy Eumenides!

Ger. Why, gentleman, did you once love?

Eum. Once? Ay, father, and ever shall.

Ger. Was she unkind and you faithful?

Eum. She of all women the most froward, and I of all creatures the most fond.

Ger. You doted then, not loved, for affection is grounded on virtue, and virtue is never peevish; or on beauty, and beauty loveth to be praised.

Eum. Ay, but if all virtuous ladies should yield to all that be loving, or all amiable gentlewomen entertain all that be amorous, their virtues would be accounted vices, and beauties deformities; for that love can be but between two, and that not proceeding of him that is most faithful but most fortunate.

Ger. I would you were so faithful that your tears might make you fortunate.

Eum. Yea, father, if that my tears clear not this fountain, then may you swear it is but a mere mockery.

Ger. So saith every one yet that wept.

Eum. Ah, I faint, I die! Ah, sweet Semele, let me alone and dissolve, by weeping, into water.

Ger. This affection seemeth strange: if he see nothing, without doubt this dissembling passeth, for nothing shall draw me from the belief.

Eum. Father, I plainly see the bottom, and there in white marble engraven these words: *Ask one for all, and but one thing at all.*

Ger. O fortunate Eumenides (for so have I heard thee call thyself), let me see. I cannot discern any such thing. I think thou dreamest.

Eum. Ah, father, thou art not a faithful lover, and therefore, canst not behold it.

Ger. Then ask, that I may be satisfied by the event, and thyself blessed.

Eum. Ask? So I will. And what shall I do but ask, and whom should I ask but Semele, the possessing of whose person is a pleasure that cannot come within the compass of comparison; whose golden locks seem most curious when they seem most careless; whose sweet looks seem most alluring when they are most chaste; and whose words the more virtuous they are, the more amorous they be accounted? I pray thee, Fortune, when I shall first meet with fair Semele, dash my delight with some light disgrace, lest embracing sweetness beyond measure, I take a surfeit without recure: let her practise her accustomed coyness that I may diet myself upon my desires; otherwise the fulness of my joys will diminish the sweetness, and I shall perish by them before I possess them. Why do I trifle the time in words? The least minute being spent in the getting of Semele is more worth than the whole world; therefore let me ask. What now, Eumenides! Whither art thou drawn? Hast thou forgotten both friendship and duty, care of Endymion, and the commandment of Cynthia? Shall he die in a leaden sleep because thou sleepest in a golden dream? Ay, let him sleep ever, so I slumber but one minute with Semele. Love knoweth neither friendship nor kindred. Shall I not hazard the loss of a friend for the obtaining of her for whom I would often lose myself? Fond Eumenides, shall the enticing beauty of a most disdainful lady be of more force than the rare fidelity of a tried friend? The love of men to women is a thing common and of course; the friendship of man to man infinite and immortal. Tush! Semele doth possess my love. Ay, but Endymion hath deserved it. I will help Endymion. I found Endymion unspotted in his truth. Ay, but I shall find Semele constant in her love. I will have Semele. What shall I do? Father, thy gray hairs are ambassadors of experience. Which shall I ask?

Ger. Eumenides, release Endymion, for all things, friendship excepted, are subject to fortune: love is but an eye-worm, which only tickleth the head with hopes and wishes; friendship the image of eternity, in which there is nothing movable, nothing mischievous. As much difference as there is between beauty and virtue, bodies and shadows, colors and life, so great odds is there between love and friendship. Love is a chameleon, which draweth nothing into the mouth but air, and nourisheth nothing in the body

but lungs: believe me, Eumenides, desire dies in the same moment that beauty sickens, and beauty fadeth in the same instant that it flourisheth. When adversities flow, then love ebbs; but friendship standeth stiffly in storms. Time draweth wrinkles in a fair face, but addeth fresh colors to a fast friend, which neither heat, nor cold, nor misery, nor place, nor destiny, can alter or diminish. O friendship, of all things the most rare, and therefore most rare because most excellent, whose comforts in misery is always sweet, and whose counsels in prosperity are ever fortunate! Vain love, that, only coming near to friendship in name, would seem to be the same or better in nature!

Eum. Father, I allow your reasons, and will therefore conquer mine own. Virtue shall subdue affection, wisdom lust, friendship beauty. Mistresses are in every place, and as common as hares on Athos, bees in Hybla, fowls in the air; but friends to be found are like the phoenix in Arabia, but one; or the philadelphi, in Arays, never above two. I will have Endymion. Sacred fountain, in whose bowels are hidden divine secrets, I have increased your waters with the tears of unspotted thoughts, and therefore let me receive the reward you promise: Endymion, the truest friend to me, and faithfulest lover to Cynthia, is in such a dead sleep that nothing can wake or move him.

Ger. Dost thou see anything?

Eum. I see in the same pillar these words: *When she whose figure of all is the perfectest, and never to be measured; always one, yet never the same; still inconstant, yet never wavering; shall come and kiss Endymion in his sleep, he shall then rise, else never.* This is strange.

Ger. What see you else?

Eum. There cometh over mine eyes either a dark mist, or upon the fountain a deep thickness, for I can perceive nothing. But how am I deluded, or what difficult, nay impossible, thing is this?

Ger. Methinketh it easy.

Eum. Good father, and how?

Ger. Is not a circle of all figures the perfectest?

Eum. Yes.

Ger. And is not Cynthia of all circles the most absolute?

Eum. Yes.

Ger. Is is not impossible to measure her, who still worketh by her influence, never standing at one stay?

- Eum.* Yes.
- Ger.* Is she not always Cynthia, yet seldom in the same bigness; always wavering in her waxing or waning, that our bodies might the better be governed, our seasons the dailier give their increase; yet never to be removed from her coursé, as long as the heavens continue theirs?
- Eum.* Yes.
- Ger.* Then who can it be but Cynthia, whose virtues being all divine must needs bring things to pass that be miraculous? Go, humble thyself to Cynthia; tell her the success, of which myself shall be a witness. And this assure thyself, that she that sent to find means for his safety will now work her cunning.
- Eum.* How fortunate am I, if Cynthia be she that may do it!
- Ger.* How fond art thou, if thou do not believe it!
- Eum.* I will hasten thither that I may entreat on my knees for succor, and embrace in mine arms my friend.
- Ger.* I will go with thee, for unto Cynthia must I discover all my sorrows, who also must work in me a contentment.
- Eum.* May I now know the cause?
- Ger.* That shall be as we walk, and I doubt not but the strangeness of my tale will take away the tediousness of our journey.
- Eum.* Let us go.
- Ger.* I follow.

[*Exeunt* EUMENIDES and GERON.]

* * * *

ACT THE FIFTH

SCENE I

Enter SAMIAS and DARES

- Sam.* Eumenides hath told such strange tales as I may well wonder at them, but never believe them.
- Dar.* The other old man, what a sad speech used he, that caused us almost all to weep. Cynthia is so desirous to know the experiment of her own virtue, and so willing to ease Endymion's hard fortune, that she no sooner heard the discourse but she made herself in a readiness to try the event.
- Sam.* We will also see the event. But whist, here cometh Cynthia with all her train. Let us sneak amongst them.

Enter CYNTHIA, FLOSCULA, SEMELE, SUMENIDES, PANELION,
ZONTES, PYTHAGORAS, and GYPTES

Cynth. Eumenides, it cannot sink into my head that I should be signified by that sacred fountain, for many things are there in the world to which those words may be applied.

Eum. Good madam, vouchsafe but to try; else shall I think myself most unhappy that I asked not my sweet mistress.

Cynth. Will you not yet tell me her name?

Eum. Pardon me, good madam, for if Endymion awake, he shall; myself have sworn never to reveal it.

Cynth. Well, let us to Endymion. I will not be so stately, good Endymion, not to stoop to do thee good, and if thy liberty consist in a kiss from me, thou shalt have it; and although my mouth hath been heretofore as untouched as my thoughts, yet now to recover thy life, though to restore thy youth it be impossible, I will do that to Endymion which yet never mortal man could boast of heretofore, nor shall ever hope for hereafter. [*She kisseth him.*]

Eum. Madam, he beginneth to stir.

Cynth. Soft, Eumenides; stand still.

Eum. Ah, I see his eyes almost open.

Cynth. I command thee once again, stir not: I will stand behind him.

Pan. What do I see,—Endymion almost awake.

Eum. Endymion, Endymion, art thou deaf or dumb, or hath this long sleep taken away thy memory? Ah, my sweet Endymion, seest thou not Eumenides, thy faithful friend, thy faithful Eumenides, who for thy safety hath been careless of his own content? Speak Endymion,—Endymion,—Endymion!

End. Endymion? I call to mind such a name.

Eum. Hast thou forgotten thyself, Endymion? Then do I not marvel thou rememberest not thy friend. I tell thee thou art Endymion and I Eumenides. Behold also Cynthia, by whose favor thou are awaked, and by whose virtue thou shalt continue thy natural course.

Cynth. Endymion, speak, sweet Endymion! Knowest thou not Cynthia?

End. O heavens, whom do I behold? Fair Cynthia, divine Cynthia?

Cynth. I am Cynthia, and thou Endymion.

End. "Endymion!" What do I hear? What, a gray beard, hollow eyes, withered body, decayed limbs,—and all in one night?

- Eum.* One night! Thou hast here slept forty years,—by what enchantress as yet it is not known,—and behold, the twig to which thou laidest thy head is now become a tree. Call-est thou not Eumenides to remembrance?
- End.* Thy name I do remember by the sound, but thy favor I do not yet call to mind; only divine Cynthia, to whom time, fortune, destiny and death are subject, I see and remember, and in all humility I regard and reverence.
- Cynth.* You have good cause to remember Eumenides, who hath for thy safety forsaken his own solace.
- End.* Am I that Endymion who was wont in court to lead my life, and in justs, tourneys, and arms, to exercise my youth? Am I that Endymion?
- Eum.* Thou art that Endymion, and I Eumenides: wilt thou not yet call me to remembrance?
- End.* Ah, sweet Eumenides, I now perceive thou art he, and that myself have the name of Endymion; but that this should be my body I doubt, for how could my curled locks be turned to gray hairs and my strong body to a dying weakness, having waxed old, and not knowing it.
- Cynth.* Well; Endymion, arise. [*Endymion trying to rise, sinks back.*] Awhile sit down, for that thy limbs are still and not able to stay thee, and tell what hast thou seen in thy sleep all this while,—what dreams, visions, thoughts, and fortunes; for it is impossible but in so long time thou shouldst see things strange.
- End.* Fair Cynthia, I will rehearse what I have seen, humbly desiring that when I exceed in length, you give me warning, that I may end; for to utter all I have to speak would be troublesome, although haply the strangeness may somewhat abate the tediousness.
- Cynth.* Well, Endymion, begin.
- End.* Methought I saw a lady passing fair, but very mischievous, who in the one hand carried a knife with which she offered to cut my throat, and in the other a looking-glass, wherein seeing how ill anger became ladies, she refrained from intended violence. She was accompanied with other damsels, one of which, with a stern countenance, and as it were with a settled malice engraven in her eyes, provoked her to execute mischief; another, with visage sad, and constant only in sorrow, with her arms crossed, and watery eyes, seemed to lament my fortune, but durst not offer to prevent the force. I started in my sleep, feeling my very

veins to swell and my sinews to stretch with fear, and such a cold sweat bedewed all my body that death itself could not be so terrible as the vision.

Cynth. A strange sight: Gyptes, at our better leisure, shall expound it.

End. After long debating with herself, mercy overcame anger, and there appeared in her heavenly face such a divine majesty mingled with a sweet mildness that I was ravished with the sight above measure, and wished that I might have enjoyed the sight without end; and so she departed with the other ladies, of which the one retained still an unmovable cruelty, the other a constant pity.

Cynth. Poor Endymion, how wast thou affrighted! What else?

End. After her, immediately appeared an aged man with a beard as white as snow, carrying in his hand a book with three leaves, and speaking, as I remember, these words: *Endymion, receive this book with three leaves, in which are contained counsels, policies, and pictures*, and with that he offered me the book, which I rejected; wherewith, moved with a disdainful pity, he rent the first leaf in a thousand shivers. The second time he offered it, which I refused also; at which, bending his brows, and pitching his eyes fast to the ground, as though they were fixed to the earth, and not again to be removed, then suddenly casting them up to the heavens, he tore in a rage the second leaf, and offered the book only with one leaf. I know not whether fear to offend or desire to know some strange thing moved me,—I took the book, and so the old man vanished.

Cynth. What didst thou imagine was in the last leaf?

End. There portrayed to life, with a cold quaking in every joint, I beheld many wolves barking at thee, Cynthia, who, having ground their teeth to bite, did with striving bleed themselves to death. There might I see Ingratitude with an hundred eyes gazing for benefits, and with a thousand teeth gnawing on the bowels wherein she was bred; Treachery stood all clothed in white, with a smiling countenance, but both her hands bathed in blood; Envy with a pale and meagre face (whose body was so lean that one might tell all her bones, and whose garment was so tattered that it was easy to number every thread) stood shooting at stars, whose darts fell down again on her own face. There might I behold drones or beetles—I know

not how to term them—creeping under the wings of a princely eagle, who, being carried into her nest, sought there to suck that vein that would have killed the eagle. I mused that things so base should attempt a fact so barbarous, or durst imagine a thing so bloody,—and many other things, madam, the repetition whereof may at your better leisure seem more pleasing, for bees surfeit sometimes with honey, and the gods are gluttoned with harmony, and Your Highness may be dulled with delight.

Cynth. I am content to be dieted; therefore, let us in. Eumenides, see that Endymion be well tended, lest either eating immoderately or sleeping again too long, he fall into a deadly surfeit or into his former sleep. See this also be proclaimed: that whosoever will discover this practice shall have of Cynthia infinite thanks and no small rewards.

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SCENE III

Enter PANELION and ZONTES.

Pan. Who would have thought that Tellus, being so fair by nature, so honorable by birth, so wise by education, would have entered into a mischief to the gods so odious, to men so detestable, and to her friend so malicious.

Zon. If Bagoa had not bewrayed it, how then should it have come to light? But we see that gold and fair words are of force to corrupt the strongest men, and therefore able to work silly women like wax.

Pan. I marvel what Cynthia will determine in this cause.

Zon. I fear as in all causes—hear of it in justice, and then judge of it in mercy; for how can it be that she that is unwilling to punish her deadliest foes with disgrace, will revenge injuries of her train with death.

Pan. That old witch, Dipsas, in a rage, having understood her practice to be discovered, turned poor Bagoa to an aspen tree. But let us make haste and bring Tellus before Cynthia, for she was coming out after us.

Zon. Let us go.

[*Exeunt, on one side, PANELION and ZONTES; enter, at the other side, CYNTHIA, SEMELE, FLOSCULA, DIPSAS, ENDYMION, EUMENIDES, GERON, PYTHAGORAS, GYPTES, and SIR TOPHAS.*]

Cynth. Dipsas, thy years are not so many as thy vices, yet more in number than commonly nature doth afford or justice should permit. Hast thou almost these fifty years practised that detested wickedness of witchcraft? Wast thou, so simple as for to know the nature of simples, of all creatures to be most sinful? Thou hast threatened to turn my course awry and alter by thy damnable art the government that I now possess by the eternal gods, but know thou, Dipsas, and let all the enchanters know, that Cynthia, being placed for light on earth, is also protected by the powers of heaven. Breathe out thou mayst words; gather thou mayst herbs; find out thou mayst stones agreeable to thine art; yet of no force to appall my heart in which courage is so rooted, and constant persuasion of the mercy of the gods so grounded, that all thy witchcraft I esteem as weak as the world doth thy case wretched. This noble gentleman, Geron,—once thy husband but now thy mortal hate,—didst thou procure to live in a desert, almost desperate; Endymion, the flower of my court and the hope of succeeding time, hast thou bewitched by art, before thou wouldst suffer him to flourish by nature.

Dipsas. Madam, things past may be repented, not recalled: there is nothing so wicked that I have not done, nor anything so wished for as death; yet among all the things that I committed, there is nothing so much tormenteth my rented and ransacked thoughts as that in the prime of my husband's youth I divorced him by my devilish art; for which if to die might be amends, I would not live till tomorrow; if to live and still be more miserable would better content him, I would wish of all creatures to be oldest and ugliest.

Geron. Dipsas, thou hast made this difference between me and Endymion, that being both young, thou hast caused me to wake in melancholy, losing the joys of my youth, and him to sleep, not remembering youth.

Cynth. Stay, here cometh Tellus; we shall now know all.

Re-enter PANELION and ZONTES, with CORSITES and TELLUS.

Cors. I would to Cynthia thou couldst make as good an excuse in truth as to me thou hast done by wit.

Tellus. Truth shall be mine answer, and therefore I will not study for an excuse.

Cynth. Is it possible, Tellus, that so few years should harbor so many mischiefs? Thy swelling pride have I borne, because it is a thing that beauty maketh blameless, which the more it exceedeth fairness in measure, the more it stretcheth itself in disdain. Thy devices against Corsites I smile at, for that wits, the sharper they are, the shrewder they are; but this unacquainted and most unnatural practice with a vile enchantress against so noble a gentleman as Endymion I abhor as a thing most malicious, and will revenge as a deed most monstrous. And as for you, Dipsas, I will send you into the desert amongst wild beasts, and try whether you can cast lions, tigers, boars, and bears into as dead a sleep as you did Endymion, or turn them to trees, as you have done Bagoa. But tell me, Tellus, what was the cause of this cruel part, far unfitting thy sex, in which nothing should be but simpleness, and much disagreeing from thy face, in which nothing seemed to be but softness.

Tellus. Divine Cynthia, by whom I receive my life and am content to end it, I can neither excuse my fault without lying, nor confess it without shame; yet were it possible that in so heavenly thoughts as yours there could fall such earthly motions as mine, I would then hope, if not to be pardoned without extreme punishment, yet to be heard without great marvel.

Cynth. Say on, Tellus; I cannot imagine any thing that can color such a cruelty.

Tellus. Endymion, that Endymion, in the prime of his youth, so ravished my heart with love, that to obtain my desires I could not find means, nor to recite them reason. What was she that favored not Endymion, being young, wise, honorable, and virtuous; besides, what metal was she made of (be she mortal) that is not affected with the spice, nay infected with the poison of that not-to-be-expressed yet always-to-be-felt, which breaketh the brains and never bruise the brow, consumeth the heart and never toucheth the skin, and maketh a deep scar to be seen before any wound at all be felt. My heart, too tender to withstand such a divine fury, yielded to love. Madam, I, not without blushing, confess I yielded to love.

Cynth. A strange effect of love, to work such an extreme hate. How say you, Endymion? All this was for love.

End. I say, madam, then the gods send me a woman's hate.

Cynth. That were as bad, for then by contrary you should never sleep. But on, Tellus; let us hear the end.

Tellus. Feeling a continual burning in all my bowels and a bursting almost in every vein, I could not smother the inward fire, but it must needs be perceived by the outward smoke; and by the flying abroad of divers sparks, divers judged of my scalding flames. Endymion, as full of art as wit, marking mine eyes (in which he might see almost his own), my sighs (by which he might ever hear his name sounded), aimed at my heart, in which he was assured his person was imprinted, and by questions wrung out that which was ready to burst out. When he saw the depth of my affections, he swore that mine in respect of his were as fumes to *Ætna*, valleys to Alps, ants to eagles, and nothing could be compared to my beauty but his love and eternity. Thus drawing a smooth shoe upon a crooked foot, he made me believe that (which all of our sex willingly acknowledge) I was beautiful, and to wonder (which indeed is a thing miraculous) that any of his sex should be faithful.

Cynth. Endymion, how will you clear yourself?

End. Madam, by mine own accuser.

Cynth. Well, Tellus, proceed; but briefly, lest taking delight in uttering thy love, thou offend us with the length of it.

Tellus. I will, madam, quickly make an end of my love and my tale. Finding continual increase of my tormenting thoughts, and that the enjoying of my love made deeper wounds than the entering into it, I could find no means to ease my grief but to follow Endymion, and continually to have him in the object of mine eyes who had me slave and subject to his love; but in the moment that I feared his falsehood and fried myself most in mine affections, I found—ah, grief, even then I lost myself!—I found him in most melancholy and desperate terms cursing his stars, his state, the earth, the heavens, the world, and all for the love of——

Cynth. Of whom? Tellus, speak boldly.

Tellus. Madam, I dare not utter, for fear to offend.

Cynth. Speak, I say; who dare take offence, if thou be commanded by Cynthia?

Tellus. For the love of Cynthia.

Cynth. For my love, Tellus? That were strange. Endymion, is it true?

End. In all things, madam, Tellus doth not speak false.

Cynth. What will this breed to in the end? Well, Endymion, we shall hear all.

Tellus. I, seeing my hopes turned to mishaps, and a settled dissembling towards me, and an immovable desire to Cynthia, forgetting both myself and my sex, fell into this unnatural hate; for, knowing your virtues, Cynthia, to be immortal, I could not have an imagination to withdraw him; and finding mine own affections unquenchable, I could not carry the mind that any else should possess what I had pursued; for though in majesty, beauty, virtue, and dignity, I always humbled and yielded myself to Cynthia, yet in affections I esteemed myself equal with the goddesses, and all other creatures, according to their states, with myself; for stars to their bigness have their lights, and the sun hath no more, and little pitchers, when they can hold no more, are as full as great vessels that run over. Thus, madam, in all truth, have I uttered the unhappiness of my love and the cause of my hate, yielding wholly to that divine judgment which never erred for want of wisdom or envied for too much partiality.

Cynth. How say you, my lords, to this matter? But what say you, Endymion; hath Tellus told truth?

End. Madam, in all things but in that she said I loved her and swore to honor her.

Cynth. Was there such a time when as for my love thou didst vow thyself to death, and in respect of it loathed thy life? Speak, Endymion; I will not revenge it with hate.

End. The time was, madam, and is, and ever shall be, that I honored Your Highness above all the world, but to stretch it so far as to call it love I never durst. There hath none pleased mine eye but Cynthia, none delighted mine ears but Cynthia, none possessed my heart but Cynthia. I have forsaken all other fortunes to follow Cynthia, and here I stand ready to die, if it please Cynthia. Such a difference hath the gods set between our states that all must be duty, loyalty, and reverence; nothing (without Your Highness vouchsafe it) be termed love. My unspotted thoughts, my languishing body, my discontented life, let them obtain by princely favor that which to challenge they must not presume, only wishing of impossibilities; with imagination of which I will spend my spirits, and to myself, that no creature may hear, softly call it love,

and if any urge to utter what I whisper, then will I name it honor. From this sweet contemplation if I be not driven, I shall live of all men the most content, taking more pleasure in mine aged thoughts that ever I did in my youthful actions.

Cynth. Endymion, this honorable respect of thine shall be christened love in thee, and my reward for it, favor. Persevere, Endymion, in loving me, and I account more strength in a true heart than in a walled city. I have labored to win all, and study to keep such as I have won; but those that neither my favor can move to continue constant, nor my offered benefits get to be faithful, the gods shall either reduce to truth, or revenge their treacheries with justice. Endymion, continue as thou hast begun and thou shalt find that Cynthia shineth not on thee in vain.

End. Your Highness hath blessed me, and your words have again restored my youth; methinks I feel my joints strong and these mouldy hairs to moult, and all by your virtue, Cynthia, into whose hands the balance that weigheth time and fortune are committed.

Cynth. What, young again! Then it is pity to punish Tellus.

Tellus. Ah, Endymion, now I know thee and ask pardon of thee; suffer me still to wish thee well.

End. Tellus, Cynthia must command what she will.

Flosc. Endymion, I rejoice to see thee in thy former estate.

End. Good Floscula, to thee also am I in my former affections.

Eum. Endymion, the comfort of my life, how am I ravished with a joy matchless, saving only the enjoying of my mistress.

Cynth. Endymion, you must now tell who Eumenides shrineth for his saint.

End. Semele, madam.

Cynth. Semele, Eumenides? Is it Semele, the very wasp of all woman, whose tongue stingeth as much as an adder's tooth?

Eum. It is Semele, Cynthia, the possessing of whose love must only prolong my life.

Cynth. Nay, sith Endymion is restored, we will have all parties pleased. Semele, are you content after so long trial of his faith, such rare secrecy, such unspotted love, to take Eumenides? Why speak you not? Not a word?

End. Silence, madam, consents; that is most true.

- Cynth.* It is true, Endymion. Eumenides, take Semele; take her, I say.
- Eum.* Humble thanks, madam; now only do I begin to live.
- Sem.* A hard choice, madam, either to be married if I say nothing, or to lose my tongue if I speak a word. Yet do I rather choose to have my tongue cut out than my heart distempered: I will not have him.
- Cynth.* Speaks the parrot! She shall nod hereafter with signs. Cut off her tongue, nay her head, that having a servant of honorable birth, honest manners, and true love, will not be persuaded.
- Sem.* He is no faithful lover, madam, for then would he have asked his mistress.
- Ger.* Had he not been faithful, he had never seen into the fountain, and so lost his friend and mistress.
- Eum.* Thine own thoughts, sweet Semele, witness against thy words, for what hast thou found in my life but love? And as yet what have I found in my love but bitterness? Madam, pardon Semele, and let my tongue ransom hers.
- Cynth.* Thy tongue, Eumenides! What, shouldst thou live wanting a tongue to blaze the beauty of Semele! Well, Semele, I will not command love, for it cannot be enforced; let me entreat it.
- Sem.* I am content Your Highness shall command, for now only do I think Eumenides faithful, that is willing to lose his tongue for my sake; yet loath, because it should do me better service. Madam, I accept of Eumenides.
- Cynth.* I thank you, Semele.
- Eum.* Ah, happy Eumenides, that hast a friend so faithful and a mistress so fair! With what sudden mischief will the gods daunt this excess of joy? Sweet Semele, I live or die as thou wilt.
- Cynth.* What shall become of Tellus? Tellus, you know Endymion is vowed to a service from which death cannot remove him. Corsites, casteth still a lovely look towards you. How say you, will you have your Corsites, and so receive pardon for all that is past?
- Tellus.* Madam, most willingly.
- Cynth.* But I cannot tell whether Corsites be agreed.
- Cors.* Ay, madam, more happy to enjoy Tellus than the monarchy of the world.
- Eum.* Why, she caused you to be pinched with fairies.



ETHEL BARRYMORE AS OPHELIA IN "HAMLET." 1925

- Cors.* Ay, but her fairness hath pinched my heart more deeply.
- Cynth.* Well, enjoy thy love. But what have you wrought in the castle, Tellus?
- Tellus.* Only the picture of Endymion.
- Cynth.* Then so much of Endymion as his picture cometh to, possess and play withal.
- Cors.* Ah, my sweet Tellus, my love shall be as thy beauty is, matchless.
- Cynth.* Now it resteth, Dipsas, that if thou wilt forswear that vile art of enchanting, Geron hath promised again to receive thee; otherwise, if thou be wedded to that wickedness, I must and will see it punished to the uttermost.
- Dipsas.* Madam, I renounce both substance and shadow of that most horrible and hateful trade, vowing to the gods continual penance, and to Your Highness obedience.
- Cynth.* How say you, Geron; will you admit her to your wife?
- Ger.* Ay, with more joy than I did the first day, for nothing could happen to make me happy but only for forsaking that lewd and detestable course. Dipsas, I embrace thee.
- Dipsas.* And I thee, Geron, to whom I will hereafter recite the cause of these my first follies.
- Cynth.* Well, Endymion, nothing resteth now but that we depart: thou hast my favor; Tellus her friend; Eumenides in Paradise with his Semele; Geron content with Dipsas.
- Sir Top.* Nay, soft; I cannot handsomely go to bed without Bagoa.
- Cynth.* Well, Sir Tophas, it may be there are more virtues in me than myself knoweth of, for I awaked Endymion, and at my words he waxed young; I will try whether I can turn this tree again to thy true love.
- Sir Top.* Turn her to a true love or false, so she be a wench I care not.
- Cynth.* Bagoa, Cynthia putteth an end to thy hard fortunes, for, being turned to a tree for revealing a truth, I will recover thee again, if in my power be the effect of truth.
- [Bagoa becomes herself again.]*
- Sir Top.* Bagoa, a bots upon thee!
- Cynth.* Come, my lords, let us in. You, Gyptes and Pythagoras, if you cannot content yourselves in our court, to fall from vain follies of philosophers to such virtues as are here practised, you shall be entertained according to your deserts, for Cynthia is no stepmother to strangers.
- Pythag.* I had rather in Cynthia's court spend ten years than in Greece one hour.

Gyptes. And I choose rather to live by the sight of Cynthia than by the possessing of all Egypt.

Cynth. Then follow.

Eum. We all attend.

[*Exeunt all.*]

A Man walking abroad, the Wind and Sun strove for sovereignty, the one with his blast, the other with his beams. The Wind blew hard; the man wrapped his garment about him harder: it blustered more strongly; he then girt it fast to him. I cannot prevail, said the Wind. The Sun, casting her crystal beams, began to warm the man; he unloosed his gown: yet it shined brighter; he then put it off. I yield, said the Wind, for if thou continue shining, he will also put off his coat.

Dread Sovereign, the malicious that seek to overthrow us with threats, do but stiffen our thoughts, and make them sturdier in storms; but if Your Highness vouchsafe with your favorable beams to glance upon us, we shall not only stoop, but with all humility lay both our hands and hearts at Your Majesty's feet.

2. GEORGE PEELE

In another age George Peele might have been a poet of no mean ability. Living at a time when most literary men turned their attention to drama, he became an indifferent playwright.

It is supposed that he was born in London, in 1558—the year in which Elizabeth ascended the throne. However, both date and place are subject to some doubt. No date is certain concerning him until he entered Pembroke College, Oxford, in 1571, receiving his A. B. in 1577 from Christ's, where he likewise took his Master's degree.

Peele was probably married about 1583; little is known of his wife, save that he deserted her and her ten-year-old child after having wasted the property which she had brought him.

The same tale of wasted opportunities, alternating periods of work and debauchery, the same licentious habits, are to be told of Greene, Peele and several of their boon companions. Just when Peele fell victim to a dissipated career is uncertain but he is mentioned as dead in 1598.

His life was spent largely in London and shortly after leaving college he was found directing pageants, given to

celebrate anniversaries or honor distinguished men. He directed and probably wrote the pageant welcoming the new Lord Mayor in 1585.

It is highly probable that the destructive fire in London which occurred in 1666 wiped out many Elizabethan plays, of which nothing whatever is now known. The stationers and printers carried their most precious books and papers to St. Paul's which was regarded as most likely to withstand the flames, but its roof fell in and everything perished. Many an old play, dust covered and forgotten, lay in the closets of the old theatres, all of which were swept away. So it is not strange that scholars in the last century, eager to unearth every possible link in the chain of English drama, encountered some gaps which are not likely to be filled. Six surviving plays are attributed to Peele—four being undoubtedly his: the *Arraignment of Paris*, *David and Bethsabe*, the *Battle of Alcazar*, *Old Wives' Tales*, *Edward the First* and *Sir Clyomon and Sir Clamydes*. The *Battle of Alcazar*, acted in 1588 and printed in 1594, like Greene's *Alphonsus of Aragon*, is supposed to have been written under the spell of Marlowe's *Tamburlaine*. Aside from the rant that was characteristic of all three plays, there is little to distinguish it. *Edward the First*, surnamed *Edward Longshanks* was a rambling Chronicle play. As to the play of the two knights, it is not accepted by all critics as the work of Peele. *David and Bethsabe* may be regarded in some ways as a survival of the earlier miracle plays; it is unique among Elizabethan dramas in having a biblical theme. It tells the story of David's love for the fair Bathsheba and contains many musical passages. David sings:

“Bright Bethsabe shall wash, in David's bower,
In water mix'd with purest almond-flower,
And bathe her beauty in the milk of kids:
Bright Bethsabe gives earth to my desires;
Verdure to earth; and to that verdure, flowers;
To flowers, sweet odors; and to odors, wings
That carry pleasures to the hearts of kings
Now comes my lover tripping like the roe,
And brings my longings tangled in her hair.

To 'joy her I'll build a kingly bower,
 Seated in hearing of a hundred streams,
 That, for their homage to her sovereign joys
 Shall, as the serpents fold into their nests
 In oblique turnings, wind their nimble waves
 About the circles of her curious walks;
 And with their murmur summon easeful sleep
 To lay his golden sceptre on her brows.
 Open the doors, and entertain my love;
 Open, I say, and, as you open, sing,
 Welcome, fair Bethsabe, King David's love."¹

It is for its lyrical qualities rather than any construction of plot or characterization that the play is still read.

Old Wives' Tales, or as it may have originally been, *The Owlde Wife's Tale*, is often cited as illustrative of dramatic confusion. Yet it is one of Peele's most ingenious comedies. Three rogues are lost in the wood; catching a glimpse of the lantern of Clunch, a smith, they entreat him to guide them out of the forest. He takes them to his hut for the night. His wife Madge offers them refreshment, which they decline. She sends one to bed with her husband and starts to entertain the others by an old tale, which becomes confused. Presently the characters in her story spring up, as if by magic, and the remainder of the narrative is enacted by them. The novelty of the conception is marred by lack of clarity and failure to seize hold of dramatic situations.

The *Arraignment of Paris* is justly the most popular of these plays. It reveals Peele's poetical temperament and could ill be spared from its place in Tudor drama. The first portion of the comedy follows in the main the old Greek story of the Apple of Discord, which caused such jealousy among the three goddesses: Hera, Aphrodite and Pallas Athena, or translated into Latin names, among Juno, Venus and Minerva. The three candidates for the award of Paris are shown, each promising rich gifts to the shepherd if he will bestow it upon her. It is doubtful if any play had before been set upon the stage with more dazzling show. After Juno has promised:

“And for thy meed, sith I am queen of riches,
Shepherd, I will reward thee with great monarchies,
Empires and kingdoms, heaps of massy gold,
Sceptres and diadems curious to behold. . . .
And if thou like to tend thy flocks and not from them to fly
Their fleeces shall be curléd gold to please their master’s eye;
And last, to set thy heart on fire, give this one fruit to me,
And, shepherd, lo, this tree of gold will I bestow on thee!”

At this moment a golden tree suddenly arose on the platform, adorned with diadems and crowns of the precious metal. The Queen of Heaven continued:

“The ground whereon it grows, the grass, the root of gold,
The body and the bark of gold, all glistening to behold,
The leaves of burnished gold, the fruits that thereon grow
Are diadems set with pearl in gold, in gorgeous, glistening show;
And if this tree of gold in lieu may not suffice,
Require a grove of golden trees, so Juno bear the prize.”

As a background for the gorgeous array of the Mighty Ones of Olympus, in sylvan glades, rustics carried on their love affairs, which formed sub-plots.

Paris awards the Apple to Venus, which so displeases her sister goddesses that the trouble is carried to Jupiter, who summons Paris before him to explain why he has incurred their wrath. Paris utters one of the few vigorous speeches to be found in all Peele’s writings, claiming that his judgment had been wholly impartial. At length, to be rid of the squabble, Apollo offers the suggestion that women would best be judged by women. The site of this celebrated quarrel being a retreat sacred to Diana, he proposes that she be allowed to settle it.

The Mighty Ones gather to hear the verdict of the chaste goddess, Jove permitting Apollo’s solution to stand. Diana passes over all three goddesses alike and gives the object of so much contention into the keeping of a nymph, “called *Eliza*,” “*Zabetta*, by others called.” Here stands revealed the purpose of the whole play: to render homage to the Virgin Queen, before whom it was enacted by the Children of the Chapel Royal, in 1584. Surely it was more delicate flattery than was often poured out before the great

Elizabeth, whose insatiable appetite for compliments led to the burning of heavy incense before her on many an occasion.

Plays were a producer's stock in trade in an age when copyrights were yet unknown, so great care was taken to prevent them from being printed so long as they could be successfully revived upon the boards. The manager of a theatre paid as little as possible for them and guarded them jealously. Even so, they were occasionally stolen and printed surreptitiously to be produced by rival theatres. They were printed as a rule only when their days of usefulness for presentation had passed. Thus we find that although the *Battle of Alcazar* was enacted in 1588, it was not printed until 1594; the *Arraignment of Paris*, played perhaps in 1584, perhaps earlier, was printed ten years later. *David and Bethsabe* was not printed until 1599.

It is generally agreed that Shakespeare's debt to Peele was less than to Lyly and Greene; much less than to Marlowe. As to the contribution made by him, Symonds says: "Peele discovered no new vein. It is in elegant descriptions, in graceful and ingenious employment of mythology, in feeling for the charms of nature, in tenderness of expression and sweetness of versification that we find his highest poetical qualities. These he possessed in an eminent degree, considering the age in which he lived. His best, but also his earliest work, the *Arraignment of Paris*, is distinguished by a certain sense of proportion, dignity of repose, and harmonious distribution of parts, which prove that he might have become a correct poet in that period of bombast and exaggeration. But his necessities forced him to follow the taste of the times."²

3. ROBERT GREENE

The life of Robert Greene calls attention to the irregular and disorderly habits of those of his age who concerned themselves with the drama, whether as playwrights, producers, actors or hangers-on of the theatres. The fact that he and his companions were broken in health before reaching middle life, victims of social diseases, would give an element of probability to the conclusion that the tavern and

brothel were their habitual haunts, even though other abundant testimony were lacking. Nash may have reached the age of forty before succumbing to his dissipations. Greene was a spent old man in his early thirties. It was left for Shakespeare to elevate the stage from associations such as these and make the profession of the playwright more worthy of esteem.

The date of Greene's birth is given as 1558, 1560 and even set by some biographers in earlier years. He was born in Norwich; not until he received his first degree at Cambridge in 1579 is it possible to determine his dates with certainty. He received his M.A. in 1583, later entering Oxford. All his life he was proud of possessing degrees from both universities.

For several years after leaving Cambridge he travelled extensively on the continent, particularly in Spain and Italy. We have abundant sources of information as to what a sea of iniquity the Italian cities had become in the sixteenth century. Greene, according to his own statements, wallowed in the mire to the full.

On his return he married one Dorothy, whom he deserted with her child after he had wasted her dowry in riotous living. Dying some years later in London, his last act was to pen her a brief note, begging her to pay the poor shoemaker who had befriended him, without whose kindness he declared he would have died in the street.

Such is the sordid story of a sixteenth century writer, egotistical, proud of his college training, coveting public attention even though the public stood aghast at his frankly acknowledged immoralities. Much the same must be related of Peele, Nash and other of his gifted associates.

It is not for men's misdeeds but accomplishments that they are remembered, and the plays of Greene form a part of that accumulation in which later playwrights were presently to find inspiration and precedents. In addition to comedies, Greene wrote some thirty pamphlets, which first won him renown. Several of these would now be classed as novelettes, or little love-stories. Quick to feel the popular pulse, he was one of the earliest imitators of Lyly's elaborate style, known as euphuism. His early writings show

greatest imitation of this artificial expression, which gained wide notoriety for a score or more years.

There is some reason to think that only part of Greene's dramatic writings have survived. Most of those remaining are not known to have been produced before 1592, the year of his death; however, it is plain that certain of them had been composed several years previously.

The word *comedy* in Elizabethan and early English drama was applied to plays wherein the end was satisfactory. Whether amusing or sad, provided the last scene found the knots untangled and the sorrows dispelled, the play ranked as comedy, as distinguished from tragedy, wherein the hero and often the majority of the characters were murdered, killed, or in some way summarily dispatched ere the performance ended.

The *Comical History of Alphonsus, King of Aragon* is supposed to have been written after Marlowe brought forth his *Tamburlaine*, marking a new dramatic epoch. The blustering rant pervading this play held favor for the time and Greene seems to have been prompted to profit by its popularity. It is not unlikely that Marlowe's *Dr. Faustus* suggested the idea of creating another play involving magic, the result being his *Honorable History of Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, finished, it may be, in 1589. Science was utterly misunderstood at this time and the wildest notions persisted as to what Roger Bacon had purposed to accomplish by his experiments. It is with these popular ideas of him rather than anything authentic that the play has to do. Further, a delightful love story was made a part of the comedy. This concerns the Crown Prince who, off on a hunt with his companions, receives refreshment at a humble home and becomes infatuated with the fresh beauty of the daughter, Maid Margaret. The aid of the magician, Friar Bacon, is besought by the Prince, while he leaves his friend Lacy to try to win Margaret for him, Lacy to approach her in the guise of a villager. Instead of accepting Lacy's solicitude for the Prince, like Priscilla, Margaret would fain have him speak for himself. By gazing into Friar Bacon's crystal, the Prince, some distance away, was able to behold Lacy about to wed Margaret, Friar

Bungay at hand to perform the ceremony. By his magic power Bacon is able to whisk away Friar Bungay. Only at Margaret's earnest entreaties is the Prince persuaded to spare the life of Lacy, whom he would kill for his perfidy. At length all ends merrily with the peal of wedding bells.

Orlando Furioso was built of an incident in the poem of Ariosto, of the same name. *A Looking Glass for London and for England* was done jointly with Thomas Lodge. It was a sort of warning to the generation to take heed from the fate of Nineveh and reform, to waste less and give to the poor, to give thought to the orphans and the unfortunate. *George-a-Greene, Pinner of Wakefield* is usually attributed to Greene but certain critics question his authorship.

His best constructed play is conceded to be the *Scottish History of James IV*, which is no history at all. It deals entirely with fictitious matter, no historical basis having been found for it. It recounts that James IV, having just wedded Dorothy, daughter of the King of England, becomes enamoured of Ida, daughter of the Countess of Arran. Having pledged friendship to the English ruler, sealing it by the marriage, the Scottish king is in much perplexity. One Ateukin, an unprincipled person, offers to assist the ruler to satisfy his love for Ida. Failing to induce her to yield to the king's entreaties, since to do so would be sin, Ateukin is obliged to win the king's consent to assassinate Dorothy. The queen has refused to credit the reports brought to her ears regarding her husband's infatuation until attacked by the hired assassins, whose steel narrowly misses inflicting a mortal wound, and the queen escapes in the guise of a page, attended by her dwarf. Ida marries a worthy suitor and Ateukin is forced to warn James of impending danger because of the crime. Indeed, the English king invades Scotland to avenge his daughter's fate—for he supposes her to have been slain. Finally she meets the two kings on the field of battle and dissuades them from their deadly intent, is reconciled to her now repentant husband and so the play ends. To prevent an audience from wearying of so much intrigue, the

whole play is set in a frame, as it were, performed to show why a certain Scotchman has grown out of joint with his age. Oberon, king of the fairies, sets forth the prologue and fairy dances occur between the acts.

Greene presented bewildering succession of scenes rather than well developed plots. Action was not lacking in his plays; it was given in profusion, three and even four movements sometimes being carried along together rapidly. Interest was not allowed to drop but was not kept alive by a regularly moving plot that reached a climax and declined. As to his plot-structure, Wynne says: "An abounding wealth of material is condensed within the limits of a play, but its arrangement reveals no attempt at a gradual and subtle evolution of events to a climax. . . . The end is attained by the use of bold splashes of colour rather than by accurate drawing. Spaniards, Italians, Turks, Moors fill the stage like a pageant; in the best known play, *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*, magicians perform wonders, country squires kill each other for love, prince and fool exchange places, simple folk go a-fairing, kings pay state visits, devils fly off with people, all to hold the eye by their rapidly interchanging diversity; but few of them pause to be painted in detail as individuals."³

Although Greene's Oberon is a very different character from the fairy king of *Midsummer Night's Dream*, it may have suggested the conception to Shakespeare. There is something of Iago in Ateukin; and while lost plays might have shown a closer relationship, the Shakespearean student finds it absorbing to locate possible sources for the great dramatist's characters and plots, his genius transforming them always into new creations.

4. PROGRESS OF TRAGEDY

Comedy had outdistanced tragedy in England. Before the time of Kyd and Marlowe no great tragedies were produced, although several modelled on those of Seneca had occasionally been produced in schools and colleges. Close adherence to Latin methods had made tragedy too imitative to be vital; yet there was much in life at this time to suggest tragic elements which often attend human exis-

tence. Kyd and Marlowe, the first real masters of English tragedy, treated the more sinister aspects of life with such originality and skill that tragedy forthwith became as popular on the boards as the lighter, more entertaining plays had been.

One has but to recall social conditions under the late Tudors to realize how accustomed the people were to violence, torture and cruelty. Under Queen Mary at least three hundred persons were burned for holding religious views deemed heretical. Two wives of Henry VIII were executed. The heads of prisoners sent to the block were displayed for long periods on the London bridge as warnings to others. Men often fought duels and to have killed an adversary was regarded as a triumph rather than a misfortune. During the reign of Elizabeth the Queen of Scots was sentenced to death, the English queen signing her cousin's death warrant. In the Netherlands and France atrocities were perpetrated wholesale on Protestants. While these instances of violence might easily be extended, they suffice to indicate that it was an age inured to harsh and cruel methods, men glorifying in their strong right arms and lusty swords.

The Spanish Armada set sail for England with six hundred inquisitors on board and numerous instruments of torture to be used on those who did not return readily to the ancient faith. The defeat of Philip II's fleet brought such a thrill of joy to Britishers that 1588 was thereafter spoken of as the "glorious year." The portrayal of bloody deeds was highly acceptable to an audience composed of men who had fought in foreign wars, who had risen from petty pirating to recognition by the sovereign for assistance in the great naval crisis, or who had taken the administration of justice into their own hands and stabbed their foes. Quiet civilians, who had neither cause nor desire to participate in gory deeds, felt the stir in the blood and exulted in seeing them enacted upon the stage. So it soon became plain that the mere announcement of murder by messengers would no longer suffice upon the stage; the felling of the foe, the stabbing of the villain, the murder of him who had killed a friend or the suicide of one driven insane by his griefs

must needs be performed in plain sight of all who had paid an admission fee to witness tragedy.

Thomas Kyd was born in 1558; he attended the Merchant Tailors' School in London and appears to have had little or no college training. He died in 1594 and until recent years his part in dramatic development has been given scant attention. Latterly scholars have concluded that his influence upon his contemporaries, especially upon Shakespeare, was far greater than had once been supposed. He is now regarded as the probable writer of the "lost Hamlet" which suggested to Shakespeare his great masterpiece.

Kyd was the first to make popular a type of drama which had been called the tragedy of revenge. His *Spanish Tragedy*, which was printed in 1592 and probably acted as early as 1587, held the stage longest of any play of the period. Placed upon the boards again and again, it never lost its popularity. The plot discloses the cruel murder of a son, whose father thereupon determines to have revenge, which is at last attained, as one critic expresses it, "under the superintendence of a ghost." Hieronimo, the father, whose son has been cut off in his prime by a rival actuated by jealousy, bides his time to kill Lorenzo, responsible for the crime. Finally, when a little tragedy is to be presented for the entertainment of royal guests, he provides himself with a steel dagger instead of one of wood, to kill Lorenzo before the brilliant party. The ghost—borrowed from Seneca—that could not rest until the death of Horatio has been avenged, the madness that overtakes Isabella and at times possesses Hieronimo himself, threatening to frustrate his plans, the numerous murders involved, all combined to make *The Spanish Tragedy* something horrible to contemplate and worse to behold. The play was received with such gusto that it is believed that Kyd soon wrote another of similar character, the "lost Hamlet," wherein another ghost hoarsely whispered "Revenge!" until a son was spurred out of his apathy to kill him who had murdered his father.

"There is as yet no agreement among scholars as to what can be attributed to Shakespeare's borrowing rather

than to his invention and transformation. It seems entirely probable, however, that the early play was a companion-piece to *The Spanish Tragedy*, containing the motives of revenge, hesitation, insanity, intrigue, and slaughter, with the addition of the murderer's passion for the wife of the murdered. On the now established theory that the play was by Kyd, we may infer a protagonist like Hieronimo, much meditating and soliloquizing, a dramatic structure like that of *The Spanish Tragedy*, a play within a play, a mad Ophelia, and an intrigue culminating in slaughter."⁴

Many plays were written in imitation of *The Spanish Tragedy*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet* being greatest of them all.

Marlowe's tragedy differed radically from this. Instead of centering on vengeance and retaliation, it was of a higher order, portraying the struggle of a strong character doomed by force of circumstances to defeat.

Christopher Marlowe was born in Canterbury in 1564, his father being a shoemaker in that cathedral city. Marlowe attended the King's School, restored by Henry VIII to accommodate one hundred students, each of whom received an annuity of a pound to aid the defraying of necessary expenses. He received two degrees from Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, one in 1584, the other in 1587. Almost immediately upon leaving college he took his place in London to try to wrest a livelihood by his wits. An associate of Kyd, Nash, Greene and the rest of the Bohemians whom death quickly overtook in their quest for life, Marlowe was stabbed in a quarrel when twenty-nine years old. In the few years allotted him he stamped himself indelibly upon English drama.

Marlowe was a poet of extraordinary ability. He was fired with the conviction that man holds within himself all possibility. Although his plays bear the stamp of immaturity and have no moral value, they are full of the vigor, vitality and force of a young man fresh from the somewhat impractical atmosphere of the university, filled with longing for great undertakings. The last years had been marked by amazing disclosures; the ambitious felt nothing to be impossible. "Men achieved much and they dreamt of more. . . . Every one had his El Dorado distant only a short voy-

age; and, with the new world before them, poets and playwrights set sail in blithe confidence of discovery. Never before, or perhaps since, have so many new things seemed within grasp, whether in literature or in life; never has all living so throbbed with a sense of the nearness of the unattainable, the kinship of the real and the ideal."⁵

The first part of *Tamburlaine* was played in 1587, the second part, written on the wave of enthusiasm that greeted the first play, perhaps the following year. Both parts are usually considered together, since they carry the "Scythian shepherd"* along in his mad career for world dominance. In spite of his cruel deeds and the havoc he wrought, his unflagging zeal for conquest stimulated tremendous enthusiasm in Elizabethan audiences. These auditors were one with him in feeling that nothing could withstand determination and boundless ambition.

Blank verse had been used before as the vehicle of dramatic expression but Marlowe's pen transformed it and made of it something new. "Marlowe's mighty line" had a profound influence on his more gifted contemporary, born the same year as he.

Today, when the rôle of king is far from the enviable one it was a few hundred years ago, it is less easy for us to sympathize with Tamburlaine in his fierce desire for a crown than for those who made up Elizabethan audiences. To the dying Cosroe, who greets him:

"Barbarous and bloody Tamburlaine,
Thus to deprive me of my crown and life!"

Tamburlaine sets forth his insatiable ambition for power:

"The thirst of reign and sweetness of a crown. . . .
Moved me to manage arms against thy state.
Nature, that form'd us of four elements
Warring within our breasts for regiment,
Doth teach us all to have aspiring minds:
Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world,
And measure every wandering planet's course,
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres,

Will us to wear ourselves, and never rest,
Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
That perfect bliss and sole felicity,
The sweet fruition of an earthly crown."

Confidence had replaced fear in England and one may discern a reflection of that state of mind wherein all things seemed attainable in the conqueror's words:

"I hold the Fates bound fast in iron chains,
And with my hand turn Fortune's wheel about;
And sooner shall the sun fall from his sphere
Than Tamburlaine be slain or over come."

It was not the extravagant freaks of a power-drunk chieftain that held audiences intent on every word,—such Assyrian-like acts as using a captive Turkish emperor for a footstool when mounting the throne, or harnessing defeated kings to draw his chariot; but the tremendous daring of the man, who rose victorious over every obstacle and conquered every foe save death. His tenderness for Zenocrate contrasted strangely with his outbursts of cruelty. He declared that she is

"Fairer than whitest snow on Scythian hills,
Thy person is more worth to Tamburlaine
Than the possession of the Persian crown
Which gracious stars have promis'd at my birth."

Barbaric splendour shall attend her if she but consent to wed Tamburlaine:

"Thy garments shall be made of Median silk,
Enchas'd with precious jewels of mine own,
More rich and valurous than Zenocrate's;
With milk-white harts upon an ivory sled
Thou shalt be drawn amidst the frozen pools,
And scale the icy mountain's lofty tops,
Which with thy beauty will be soon resolv'd."

He faces death itself with fortitude and firm resolve. When told that he will soon rally from his pain, he answers:

"No, for I shall die.
See, where my slave, the ugly monster Death

Shaking and quivering, pale and wan for fear,
Stands aiming at me with his murdering dart,
Who flies away at every glance I give,
And, when I look away, comes stealing on!
Villain, away, and hie thee to the field!
I and my army come to load thy back
With souls of thousand mangled carcasses.
Look, where he goes! but see, he comes again
Because I stay! Techelles, let us march,
And weary Death with bearing souls to hell!"

For the moment Tamburlaine holds even dread death at bay.

In 1587 in a book of folk-stories there was printed a tale of one Faustus who had leagued with the devil and so lost his soul. The theme was suggestive in an age that still believed in black magic. Laws of England and Scotland forbade anyone to lay a blight on the crops, and King James, years later, agitated against witchcraft. Even the erudite Elizabeth sent in post haste for one who was skilled in magic on more than one occasion.

The *Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* was the second great drama to come from Marlowe's hand. In the mind of a greater genius,† more than two centuries later, the theme was transformed into one of the mightiest plays ever written. Marlowe's Faustus is not a gripping character. Although it would appear that his thirst for knowledge, after having explored the learning of the academies, led him to make a compact with the devil, agreeing to surrender his soul in turn for several years of freedom to probe the heights and depths, yet so far as we are able to follow him, he seems to have really used his freedom only as license to engage in more wholesale dissipation than otherwise he could have compassed. The thought of having spirits to do his bidding, instead of thrilling him with the hope of probing the secrets of the universe, excited in him greed for material things.

"How am I glutted with conceit of this!
Shall I make spirits fetch me what I please,
Resolve me of all ambiguities,
Perform what desperate enterprise I will?"



GRACE HAMPTON, JANE COWL AND MARION EVENSEN IN
"ANTHONY AND CLEOPATRA." 1924

I'll have them fly to India for gold,
Ransack the ocean for orient pearl,
And search all corners of the new-found world,
For pleasant fruits and princely delicacies."

Finally, when the conditions of the compact have been performed and the price previously entered upon is to be paid, Faust, who had once told Mephistopheles that he believed hell to be a fable, loses his courage, unable to face death with the dauntlessness of Tamburlaine. This was regarded as inevitable in an age when heaven and hell were accepted without question and when the wages of dabbling in black magic were everywhere understood to be eternal damnation. Of the two plays, it is probable that the majority of readers today find *Dr. Faustus* more engaging than *Tamburlaine*; mediæval beliefs still have a curious fascination for us, while acts of cruelty and ruthless warfare are likely to meet lack of response.

The Jew of Malta, Marlowe's third tragedy, was a product of its own period, when, in the popular mind at least, Jews were relentless money lenders, extorting unreasonable usury, ready to employ any measure to increase their gain. Barabas comes from his counting room where he has been indulging in his dearest pleasure—inspecting his treasure. After the merchants leave him, having announced the safe arrival of his ships, he utters a soliloquy which summarizes his private fortunes, illustrative of the fortunes of many of his race; his attitude toward Christians, born of his contact with them, is clearly revealed.

"Thus trolls our fortune in by land and sea,
And thus are we on every side enrich'd:
These are the blessings promis'd to the Jews,
And herein was old Abraham's happiness:
And what more may heaven do for earthly man
Than thus to pour out plenty in their laps,
Ripping the bowels of the earth for them,
Making the seas their servants, and the winds
To drive their substance with successful blasts?
Who hateth me but for my happiness?
Or who is honoured now but for his wealth?
Rather had I, a Jew, be hated thus

Than pitied in a Christian poverty;
For I can see no fruits in all their faith
But malice, falsehood, and excessive pride,
Which methinks fits not their profession.
Haply some hapless man hath conscience,
And for his conscience lives in beggary.
They say we are a scatter'd nation:
I cannot tell; but we have scrambled up
More wealth by far than these that brag of faith."

His one redeeming virtue is his love for his daughter Abigail, who is to be the beneficiary of his fortune. Since he holds her "as dear as Agamemnon did his Iphigenia," he feels that it is legitimate to employ any and all means to heap up gold for her.

It was difficult for Marlowe to sustain the tragic interest of his story for, as has been observed, he begins the movement so near the point of incredulity that it becomes necessary to pile up wonder upon wonder and crime upon crime until the tension is maintained by volume rather than quality.

The *Massacre of Paris*, *Queen Dido* and *Edward the Second* followed, the last, a chronicle play, being regarded as the most complete in point of construction, although the passion of the earlier plays is scarcely reached. The *Massacre of Paris* has to do with the slaughter of the Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's and includes such conspicuous characters as Henry of Navarre and the Duke of Guise. Aside from these plays, Marlowe is remembered for his poem *Hero and Leander*.

To a far greater degree than any of his predecessors or contemporaries, Marlowe influenced Shakespeare. He was a poet and, had his life not abruptly terminated before he was yet thirty, it is probable that he would have outgrown the shortcomings of immaturity. As it was, he transformed the stage and inaugurated a new dramatic era.

Marlowe bore the strong imprint of his academic training. His comparisons were usually taken from the classics; those of Shakespeare were generally found in everyday life. Marlowe's style was often bombastic, his lines written to please audiences athirst for high-sounding phrases and

boastful language. He was weak in the portrayal of women and lacking in humor. He projected himself into his dominant characters, who frequently uttered his own reflections and aspirations. The rôles of Tamburlaine, Faustus and Barabas are believed to have been designed primarily for the impersonation of Edward Allyn, a man of giant stature, admirably suited to dominating parts.

Speaking of his driving force, which he was able to project into his chief characters, Wynne says: "It is not by what they do that we remember Marlowe's heroes or villains. Their deeds probably fade into indistinctness. Few of us quite remember what were Tamburlaine's conquests, or Faustus' wonder-workings, or Barabas' crimes. But we know that if we would recall a mighty conqueror our recollections will revive the image of the Scythian shepherd; if we would picture a soul delivered over to the torments of the lost there will rush back upon us that terrible outcry of Faustus when the fatal hour is come; and if we would imagine the feelings of one for whom wealth is the joy, the meaning, the whole of life, we shall recite one of the speeches of Barabas."⁶

Within recent years efforts have been made to whitewash the reputation of Marlowe's personal life, it having been inseparably associated with Greene, Peele, Nash, Lodge and other literary men of note who in the late sixteenth century made up a little coterie in London—endeavoring to create literature that would live, at the same time satisfy the lusty audiences of the playhouses; then wasting their scanty earnings—with the possible exception of Lodge—in riotous living. To a considerable extent the explanation for their dissipation is to be found in the prevailing attitude toward the theatre and all who were in any way connected with it.

Perplexing questions surrounding Marlowe's death have given rise to many ingenious fictions, finally set at rest by the tireless investigation of Dr. Hotson, who discovered in the judicial archives of England the pardon of Marlowe's assailant, whose plea of self-defence won him his liberty. The facts of the case as disclosed by the records show that Marlowe, Frizer—who inflicted the fatal wound—, Poley

and Skeres had been spending the day at Deptford, some little distance from London, at the tavern of one Mistress Eleanor Bull. From ten o'clock in the morning until night they feasted and drank and evidently became hot with wine. A dispute arose between Frizer and Marlowe regarding the reckoning—the bill for the day's jollity; Frizer afterwards claimed, and his associates corroborated his statements, that Marlowe struck him with a dagger from behind and that he struck back to defend himself. Since a royal pardon was granted, it is apparent that in the minds of the authorities, Marlowe had at least been as much to blame as his companion.

Hotson says: "the chronology of the case emerges as follows: Ingram Frizer killed Christopher Marlowe on the evening of Wednesday, May 30, 1593. The inquest was held on Friday, June 1; and on the same day they buried Marlowe's body. The writ of *certiorari* was issued out of Chancery just two weeks later on Friday, June 15th. Thereupon Coroner Danby made his return, and Frizer's pardon was granted at Kew on Thursday, June 28th. . . .

"A most important first consideration is that there were two witnesses to the killing, evidently friends of Marlowe and Frizer, who had been feasting with them. The finding of 'homicide in self-defence' in the case is based upon an examination of Marlowe's body, of the dagger-wounds on Frizer's head, of the dagger itself, and upon the testimony of the two eye-witnesses, Poley and Skeres.

Two courses are open to us: (a) to believe as true the story of Marlowe's attack on Frizer from behind, corroborated in so far as it is by wounds on Frizer's head, which wounds must have been inflicted *before* Marlowe received his death-blow; or (b) to suppose that Frizer, Poley and Skeres after the slaying, and in order to save Frizer's life on a plea of self-defence, concocted a lying account of Marlowe's behaviour, to which they swore at the inquest, and with which they deceived the jury. The latter seems to me a possible but rather unlikely view of the case. In all probability the men had been drinking deep (the party had lasted from ten in the morning until night!) and the bitter debate over the score had roused Marlowe's intoxicated

feelings to such a pitch that, leaping from the bed, he took the nearest way to stop Frizer's mouth."'

The death of Marlowe when little past his youth was an irreparable loss to drama and yet what he had done could never be obliterated. How much Shakespeare owed to him can only be understood by studying tragedy before the time of Marlowe.

If considerable space has been given to the unfortunate incident that ended his life, it is for the reason that the brilliancy of his career made everything concerning him important; taking advantage of no proofs to the contrary, sordid tales had been devised to explain his death, the more since he was known to have departed from orthodox views and to have reached opinions of his own regarding religion—in his age a daring frequently leading to death at the stake.†

"The more we study Shakespeare in relation to his predecessors, the more obliged we are to reverse Dryden's famous dictum that he 'found not but created first the stage.' The fact is, that he found dramatic form already fixed. When he began to work among the London playwrights, the Romantic Drama in its several species—Comedy, Italian Novella, Roman History, English Chronicle, Masque, Domestic Tragedy, Melodrama—had achieved its triumph over the Classical Drama of the scholars. Rhyme had been discarded, and blank verse adopted as the proper vehicle of dramatic expression. Shakespeare's greatness consisted in bringing the type established by his predecessors to artistic ripeness, not in creating a new type. . . .

"At the same time, the more we study Shakespeare in his own works, the more do we perceive that his predecessors, no less than his successors, exist for him; that without him English dramatic art would be but second-rate; that he is the keystone of the arch, the justifier and interpreter of his time's striving impulses.

"Without those predecessors, Shakespeare would certainly not have been what he is. But having him, we might well afford to lose them. Without those successors, we should certainly miss much that lay implicit in the art of

Shakespeare, but having him we could well dispense with them. His predecessors lead up to him and help us to explain his method. His successors supplement his work, illustrating the breadth and length and depth and versatility of English poetry in that prolific age.”⁸

* Timur the 14th, Conqueror of Western Asia.

† Goethe: *Faust*.

‡ For citations from *Doctor Faustus*, see Appendix.

¹ First Act.

² Symond: *Shakespeare's Predecessors*, p. 451.

³ Wynne: *Growth of English Drama*, p. 147.

⁴ Thorndyke: *Tragedy*, p. 104.

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 78.

⁶ Wynne: *Growth of English Drama*, p. 222.

⁷ Hotson: *The Death of Marlowe*, p. 1925.

⁸ Symonds: *Shakespeare's Predecessors*.

SHAKESPEARE

SHAKESPEARE'S LIFE

SHAKESPEARE'S supreme genius has made his writings of tremendous import to civilized people the world over; consequently no effort has been spared in the last few years to ransack all records and archives that might open the way for fresh disclosures concerning him. One scholar has personally inspected a million documents with the hope of verifying or refuting tradition. Others have done monumental work, searching through English archives for all references to Elizabethan and Jacobean plays and players, as well as exploring the records of Stratford for data that might elucidate the life of England's renowned dramatist, the most gifted playwright of the modern world.

Unfortunately such unflagging perseverance has added little to what had long been known of Shakespeare; indeed, it is safe to say that it has tended to diminish rather than augment Shakespearean data, for under such relentless probing many an old tradition has melted into thin air. For this reason, if no other, preference should be given to biographies of the poet produced in the light of recent research, those antedating the present century as a rule perpetuating time-honored inventions.

It has been aptly observed that only four facts are firmly established regarding Shakespeare's personal life before he became thirty years of age: first, his baptism, three days after his birth in Stratford, on Sunday, April 23, 1564; second, his marriage with Ann Hathaway; third, the baptism of his first born, Suzanne, and finally, the birth of the twins, Hamnet and Judith.

While the lineage of his mother, who was of gentle birth, can be traced through Guy of Warwick as far back as King Alfred, a dimly remote ancestor, his father's family has been established only to the third generation. In the middle of the sixteenth century Richard Shakespeare lived as a tenant on an estate belonging to Robert Arden, a prosper-

ous country squire, who leased to tenants this particular holding of one hundred acres. Richard's son, John Shakespeare, doubtless helped his father to till the land during boyhood, leaving the village of Snitterfield, on whose outskirts the farm lay, for Stratford when he became old enough to launch out for himself.

Stratford, with its two thousand inhabitants and trade activities, afforded a more promising field for an enterprising young man. John seems to have learned the glover's trade but since it was necessary to follow more than one line to eke out a livelihood in this little town, he began to trade in wool and other country produce, such as feed and grain.

It would appear that during his father's tenancy on Robert Arden's property, John had found opportunity to become acquainted with the squire's daughter, Mary, although the Ardens dwelt on the ancestral estate some distance away. It is not unlikely that the young man's industry may have won the father's approval, for in 1557 the two were married. Mary was youngest of eight daughters, and it was not unusual for younger children of the gentry to intermarry with ambitious yeomen, even though by so doing they lost their right to the family crest. Upon her father's death Mary was well provided for and it was afterwards a sore cross to John that through misfortune and at least one instance of poor judgment he lost the fair estate which his gentle wife brought to him beyond the usual dowry.

He had early leased a house on Henley Street in Stratford, afterwards buying the one adjoining. These two houses he united by interior openings, one serving as a dwelling, the other as a country shop for the display of wool, grain and so on. Years after when the lease expired he bought the original building and the structure, built of wood and plaster, is visited yearly by thousands of tourists who wish to see with their own eyes the birthplace of William Shakespeare. Here John brought his bride in 1557, here their children were born and the parents lived and died.

Having lost two infant daughters, they guarded their son with special care, the more since the plague, that fre-

quent but dread visitor, stalked through the locality during the first summer of his life.

Upon the death of Richard Shakespeare, his son John inherited his possessions. He was already a man of importance in the community, one office after another being bestowed upon him. Having served as alderman, a position of responsibility, he was chosen High Bailiff of Stratford in 1568—an office corresponding to that of mayor. In the town records he is mentioned as *John Shakespeare, Justice of the Peace and Bailiff of the Town*.

Five other children were born to John and Mary after the birth of William: Ann, who died in childhood, Gilbert, Joan, Richard and Edmund, all of whom lived to maturity. Edmund went to London during his eldest brother's residence there, became an actor and later died in the city.

A respected citizen and office-holder of his community, the father of a large family, John Shakespeare applied in 1596 to the Herald's College in London for permission to inscribe himself *gentleman*. The regulation governing this dignity at the time was: "If any person be advanced into an office or dignity of public administration, be it either ecclesiastical, martial or civil, . . . the Herald must not refuse to devise to such a public person, upon his instant request and willingness to bear the same without reproach, a coat of arms, and thenceforth to matriculate him, with his inter-marriages and issues descending, in the register of the gentle and noble. . . . In the civil or political state, diverse offices of dignity and worship do merit coats of arms to the possessor of the same offices, as Bailiffs of cities and ancient boroughs or incorporated towns."

In spite of his qualification, under such conditions, to assume the rank of gentleman and eager as he doubtless was to restore to his wife the social standing which she had sacrificed by marrying him, it was a costly matter to obtain a coat of arms. Although the Herald's office submitted a design to him, the matter was allowed to drop in face of reverses which now overtook him.

The financial embarrassments which befell the family were due to several causes, the most important doubtless

being that traffic in wool, which had formerly supported various activities in Stratford, either became diminished in point of supply or diverted elsewhere. Pressed for money, John borrowed of his brother-in-law forty pounds, giving as security the estate which Mary Arden had inherited from her father. The legal procedure then followed was to give outright a deed to property thus offered as security, a stipulation being included to the effect that should the sum loaned be returned on or before a date enumerated, the deed would become null and void. John disposed of other property in order to hand over the forty pounds on the day agreed upon but his brother-in-law, to his astonishment, refused to release the property unless other obligations, which he claimed were due him for other transactions, should be paid as well. As a result the matter was taken into the courts, dragged on an interminable time; the brother-in-law died and his son refused to honor an agreement of his father to return the estate whenever all sums due him were paid. Long years after William Shakespeare brought the case again into the courts, experienced a similar delay and ultimately the property was lost to the family.

There is no existing testimony to the effect that William attended the Stratford Grammar School, but it is safe to assume it, since no other means of gaining an education was open to a Stratford lad. The town took pride in its excellent school. A larger salary was paid the teacher than even Eton paid its master, with the result that university trained men filled the position, year after year. The names of those who drew funds as masters during the boy's probable school years are known. At what time he may have been withdrawn to help supplement the family's scanty income is but a matter of conjecture.

Certainly the household perplexities were increased rather than lessened when he, but nineteen years of age, brought a bride home to the house on Henley Street. Ann Hathaway, whose family lived across the meadows a mile and a half away, at Shottery, had won his heart, despite being several years his senior. It has traditionally been assumed that his married life was irksome and unhappy to

the poet, due less perhaps to the disparity of their ages than to the inability of his wife to enter into the absorbing affairs that came later to engross him. Latterly certain biographers have sought to dispel this impression, proving little perhaps but their excellent intentions. There is no great evidence that men of this period as a rule found much mental companionship in their families. Notable examples exist, to be sure, such as that of Thomas More in years previous, but among all the playwrights whose names make splendid the Elizabethan roster, it would be difficult to search out many whose sole satisfaction was attributable to domestic felicity.

The old poaching tale which for three hundred years has done service to explain Shakespeare's departure to London is doomed in the light of late investigations, but it is safe to say that it will die hard. As long as preserves were maintained by nobles for their private hunting grounds, with dire threats confronting any who should be found shooting a deer on their property, youths were bound to find poaching a highly delectable sport. Tradition held that Shakespeare got into trouble for deer-shooting on the estate of one Sir Thomas Lucy, to escape whose ire, he fled to the capital. It is stated today that Sir Thomas Lucy had no deer-park, no keeper, no preserve that could have enticed a young man, and that, further, it is improbable that the father of three children would have been found fleeing his native town under such discrediting circumstances. Be that as it may, Shakespeare was in London by 1590. Under what conditions he quitted Stratford, what he did first upon his arrival in the great city, how he had supported his family before he went away, are all queries which supported evidence does not answer, although solutions are frequently offered. In his highly enjoyable and elucidating life of Shakespeare, recently published, Adams offers the suggestion that the poet taught a country school after his marriage, previous to his going to London. This he regards as probable because it would account to some extent for his fair education, drilling pupils in Latin being a well recognized way of impressing the forms upon one's mind. In the absence of proof one surmise is doubtless as good as

another, yet it may be hazarded that certain lovers of Shakespeare throughout the length and breadth of the land may find it difficult to visualize him in precisely this time-honoured but unquestionably painstaking rôle.

Richard Field, whose father was a Stratford tanner, and who in all probability had been a schoolmate of Shakespeare, had preceded him by several years to London. Field had first been apprenticed to a printer, a French Huguenot by the name of Vantrollier. Later, after the printer's death, he had married his widow, coming thus into possession of one of the finest printing establishments in England. It is reasonable to suppose that he may have assisted his former friend to find occupation. Certain it is that he printed Shakespeare's earliest poetry.

By some means, whether by assisting outside a playhouse by holding the horses of the young bloods who came to strut about, more to show their fine feathers than to witness the play, or by rendering help within, Shakespeare soon became associated with one of the companies playing in London. He presently proved useful in reworking old plays which were in the possession of the company and constituted their stock-in-trade. *Titus Andronicus*,[†] a play written perhaps by Greene is thought by some to have been his first attempt in this direction.

The plague, probably never wholly absent, soon broke out, causing plays together with all other needless assembling of people to be prohibited. The company with which Shakespeare had hitherto been associated left for a tour on the continent while he remained in the city. There being no further demand for his help in recasting old plays, he followed the tendency of the times and began to write amorous poetry. It was plain that he needed the patronage of some wealthy nobleman who could aid him until he might gain a foothold, so he chose to dedicate his first poem, *Venus and Adonis*, to the Earl of Southampton, who had lately come into great wealth. The Earl was pleased by the courtesy and is known to have rendered Shakespeare timely assistance. Soon after, *Lucrece* and some of the sonnets were written.

In 1594 the actors were able to resume their activities in London and Shakespeare became a member of the Lord Chancellor's company, playing at The Theatre. His name is included with the actors belonging to the organization, of which Richard Burbage was the distinguished tragedian, Will Kempe the popular comedian. At the same time he engaged to recast old plays or write new ones. The rival company at the time, known as the Admiral's Men, was managed by Henslowe, with Edward Alleyn as leading actor. Previous to this time the *Comedy of Errors* had been done by Shakespeare for presentation by members of Gray's Inn.

Little is known of Shakespeare's part as an actor. There has been some surmising as to parts played by him but nothing indicates that he attained any marked degree of success on the stage. On the other hand, the fact that his name was retained for years with the cast would indicate that he was far from being a failure.

Chronicle plays now received his attention. An old play of Peele's was combined with another of Marlowe's, these comprising two parts of *Henry VI*. To continue the historical narrative, Shakespeare wrote *Richard III*, and later, *Richard II*. The *Troublesome Reign of King John* was transformed into something new under the pen of the young dramatist. In 1596, about the time these plays were presented, he wrote his delightful *Midsummer Night's Dream*, devising the rôle of Bottom for Will Kempe.

Three or four plays followed yearly; 1597 saw the first performance of *Romeo and Juliet*, which shows influence of Marlowe, as does also the *Merchant of Venice*, originally the *Jew of Venice*, the author having the *Jew of Malta* in mind. The *Taming of the Shrew* was redone, both parts of *Henry IV* written and, at the request of Elizabeth who would see Falstaff in love, the *Merry Wives of Windsor* was produced in a fortnight. The dates for some of these plays are uncertain. *Henry V* and *Julius Cæsar* are usually attributed to 1598.

The Globe was opened in 1599 and three comedies followed after one another: *Much Ado about Nothing*, *As You Like It* and *What You Will*. Because this last became so

intimately associated with its production before the Queen on Twelfth Night, it was thereafter known by that name, although having no other connection with the holiday.

Those who try to correlate Shakespeare's writings with the course of his life find a reason for his turning to tragedy in the loss of his little son, Hamnet. Beyond doubt this was one of the deepest griefs the poet was ever compelled to bear. It put an end to all his hopes of founding a family to bear his name and it meant the loss of the child dearest to him. Yet without such personal sorrow, having won renown as a writer of light plays, it was inevitable that he should attempt something more profound. *Hamlet* is now known to have been an old play, originally written by Kyd, or if not, in close imitation to his style. It was now redone by Shakespeare, who transformed it by his genius.

The death of Queen Elizabeth in 1603 set in motion many changes. All playhouses were closed until the arrival of James I. He proved himself disposed to give strong support to the players. Shakespeare's company became known henceforth as the King's Men, the prominent members of the company being given the rank of Grooms of the Royal Chamber; the Admiral's company was henceforth called the Prince's Men; Worchester's Men, Her Majesty's Company; and the Children of Blackfriar's, Children of Her Majesty's Revels.

Othello, most perfectly constructed of all Shakespearean plays, was produced in 1604, while an old drama, known as *King Leir*, was entirely transformed, being shown first in 1606.

Macbeth was probably written out of compliment to the Scotch king who had shown actors so much favor, Banquo being alluded to as founder of the Stuart line and the king himself referred to as one of his descendants.

Pericles is believed to be largely the work of some one else, merely touched up by Shakespeare. It was played at the Globe with such popularity that one afterwards speaking of the prologue of another play said:

"And if it prove so happily to please
We'll say 'tis fortunate, like *Pericles*."

Timon of Athens appeared about the same time, its involved authorship having been much discussed in recent years.

All these years Shakespeare had been steadily amassing a fairly good fortune and had become an extensive property-holder in Stratford. He purchased the most pretentious house in the little town, New Place, whither he often came to rest and spend some time with his family. His eldest daughter, Suzanne, seems to have been very companionable, her ready wit resembling his own. She married John Hall, an enterprising young physician. These two were devoted to the poet who made them his chief beneficiaries.

Yet, until failing health forced him into retirement, it is scarcely in the seclusion of a country home that we think of Shakespeare, but rather in London, among those gifted associates who prized his friendship—at the Globe where he played and, more especially, where he drilled others in his lines: at the Mermaid, that famous hostelry where the wits of the age gathered for inspiration as well as cheer. Beaumont exclaims:

“What things have we seen
Done at the Mermaid! heard words that have been
So nimble, and so full of subtle flame,
As if that every one, from whence they came
Had meant to put his whole wit in a jest,
And had resolv'd to live a fool the rest
Of his dull life.”

Shakespeare's capacity for friendship has been frequently noted. His amiability, quick humour, and keen observation made him everywhere a favorite.

Fewer productions appeared from the master's hand. *Coriolanus* completed a trilogy of three Roman plays, the others being *Julius Caesar* and *Cleopatra*.

In Holinshed and in an old tale of Boccaccio Shakespeare found material suggestive for *Cymbeline*, which has been called the “sweetest, tenderest, profoundest of almost all the immortal galaxy.” Nevertheless, some hold it to be his creation only in part, he doing the character of Imogen and another developing that of Cymbeline, according to this theory.

In 1610 the *Winter's Tale* was produced, this being a dramatization of Greene's novelette, *Pandosto*. *The Tempest* followed. This play includes a Masque, which dramatic form was then popular at Court.

The dramatist's time was now largely spent at his country home on the peaceful Avon. Just how much he had to do with *Two Noble Kinsmen*—Chaucer's *Palamon and Arcite*—is hard to tell. He may merely have revised the work of another. In collaboration with Fletcher he wrote *Henry VIII*, which was presented at the Globe in June, 1613. This was a never-to-be-forgotten performance. James the First and other distinguished personages came to witness its presentation. A cannon salute being fired to welcome the king, a spark fell upon the thatched roof which extended over the boxes. No attention was given the matter until the whole building burst into flames, and the spectators were forced to flee for safety.

The stockholders, of whom Shakespeare was one, immediately raised funds to rebuild the theatre, erected on the same site and known as the New Globe.

During the last five years of his life Shakespeare was out of health and spent much time at home, where Dr. Hall took care of him to the best of his professional ability. Death came suddenly in 1616. He was interred in the local church, given a place of honor. Due probably to the lines which the poet is believed to have penned himself, in anticipation of his offtaking, inscribed in rude letters on a slab of stone which was placed over his grave, his remains have never been disturbed, whereas those of his daughter and of others interred in the church were removed after some generations to a common repository, or charnel house, in the churchyard, to make room for those holding conspicuous places in the town at the time of their demise.

*Good friend, for Jesus' sake forbear
To digg the dust enclosed heare;
Blest be ye man that spares thes stones,
And curst be he that moves my bones.*

An Oxford student who visited Stratford at the close of the seventeenth century made this comment, which doubt-

less reveals the motive prompting Shakespeare to pen the crude lines: "The little learning these verses contain would be a strong argument of the want of it in the author did they not carry something in them which stands in need of a comment. There is in this church a place which they call the bone-house, a repository for all the bones they dig up, which are so many that they would load a great number of wagons. The poet, being willing to preserve his bones unmoved, lays a curse upon him that moves them; and having to do with clerks and sextons, for the most part a very ignorant sort of people, he descends to the meanest of their capacity."

Stratford has done much to do honor to her most celebrated citizen. A Memorial Theatre has been erected and here each year for the week of the birthday, players come from London to present Shakespearean plays. One of the finest libraries in the world has been assembled here for the reference use of Shakespearean students. In ways such as these has his native town sought to commemorate his remarkable life.

In another sense Shakespeare never died. Playhouses in America and Europe present his plays to enthusiastic audiences, as they have continued to do in every generation since his time. Various interpretations of his leading characters have been offered here and across the sea by gifted actors again and again. His plays have been translated into the tongues of all civilized nations and are enjoyed as much by foreigners as by the English speaking people. Having created universal types, his characters appeal to all men in all lands. It is this Shakespeare which we usually have in mind when the great dramatist is mentioned, the creator of the hesitating Hamlet, the desolate old King Lear, the jealous Othello, the passionate Romeo, the winsome Rosalind and whimsical Portia. His devotees think of him as forever in his prime, building those masterpieces which defy time, sparring with his colleagues, after the manner described by Fuller, who wrote: "Though his genius was generally jocular and inclining him to festivity, yet he could, when so disposed, be solemn and serious. . . . Many were the wit-combats betwixt him and Ben Jonson;

which two I beheld like a Spanish galleon and an English man-of-war; Master Jonson (like the former) was built far higher in learning; solid but slow in his performances. Shakespeare, with the English man-of-war, lesser in bulk, but lighter in sailing, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds, by the quickness of his wit and invention."²

It is thus, rather than in the peaceful church by the gently flowing Avon that we like best to think of Shakespeare.

* C. W. Wallace.

† As for example, Shakespeare Documents, D. H. Lambert.

¹ Quoted in Adams: *Life of Shakespeare*.

² Ibid.

Note—J. Q. Adams, *A Life of Shakespeare*, 1923, is highly instructive and elucidating.

EARLY LONDON PLAYHOUSES

WITH the rise of strolling companies the problem of finding suitable places for presenting their repertoire became insistent. In France such companies were sometimes permitted to give secular plays in the spacious church provided they gave the saint's play for the parish, but even then such procedure was sure to awaken the hostility of the upper clergy, although the people, in their eagerness for diversion, usually favored it. The courtyard of inns supplied the most available place in England and was appropriated by players for several reasons. First, people naturally gathered around the hostelries and hosts were likely to welcome entertainment for their guests; again, the nature of the courtyard, enclosed as it was on all four sides by the building, provided with galleries or covered verandas where the more discriminating guests might be seated to watch the play, while the rabble pressed around the stage, erected in the courtyard itself, afforded equipment ready at hand for the players. It was under primitive conditions such as these that plays were shown in England for a long time and when later structures were raised for the sole accommodation of theatrical companies, they incorporated many of the characteristics of the inn courtyard.

Beyond question the lot of the actor was precarious in these early times; had it not been for Court patronage it is unlikely that English drama could have attained the heights reached in the closing sixteenth century. Puritanism made itself felt before the middle of the century and continued to protest more loudly each year at what was called "the devise of the devil." Town officers, whether in London or in the leading centers of the kingdom, were usually arrayed against the players for more tangible reasons. The presence of the strollers undoubtedly increased the need of vigilance, for, until they were regulated by law, these traveling companies often included disorderly and objectionable characters, whose coming was the occasion for local ruffians

to seek quarrels with them. Pick-pockets, cut-purses and rowdies mingled among the spectators, much as they do still wherever carnivals or merrymakings bring about a loosening of authority.

Favoring the players, yet always to be found on the side of law and order, Elizabeth at the beginning of her reign issued an edict that all players should secure a license from some nobleman, under whose protection alone they would be allowed to travel about, lacking which they would of necessity fall under the vagabond law. This authorized officers to return wanderers to the region where they belonged, punishment being first inflicted to discourage a repetition of the offense. It was easy enough for the more enterprising of the players to secure noble patronage, the lords being disposed to give their protection in turn for entertainment at times when they entertained guests or wished to celebrate special occasions. The worthless element, unable to gain patronage, was compelled to abandon this mode of life and seek other employment.

The privilege enjoyed by the city of London in conducting its local affairs reached into antiquity. William the Conqueror issued a charter to the town confirming rights which antedated the conquest. Richard I gave the city a charter which insured it the right to control river traffic. Several charters were granted or renewed by King John. Succeeding rulers continued to confirm the corporation in its freedom of self government.

The area comprising the corporation has been roughly described as about one mile square, extending from the Thames to the walls which guarded it on the north, east to the Tower, west to the monastery of the Black Friars. Fleet Street merged in the Strand, which joined London to Westminster, four or five miles to the west, also on the river.

During the Norman period the monastic orders became firmly established in the outskirts of the city and under the Plantagenets the friars founded their establishments. By the time of Henry VII, priories, convents, monasteries, churches and various types of religious institutions formed a semicircle reaching entirely around the capital. With their gardens, chapter houses, hospitals and other holdings

these occupied about one-third the entire area of London, which by this time had spread far beyond the borders of the corporation. Many of these religious holdings had always been free from local control, the orders being responsible only to the Pope. Under their management about one-third the total population of the municipality was enrolled. Beyond any question it was the value this extensive space would have for secular purposes that largely influenced Henry VIII to suppress the religious houses and confiscate their holdings. Parliament passed an act under Edward VI decreeing the confiscated land to revert to the crown. Much of it was presently disposed of by purchase but it carried with it the ancient freedom from local control. Hence such holdings were referred to as "the liberties." Differences soon arose and long continued regarding these areas, over which the Lord Mayor and Aldermen could exercise no authority. Partial control, such as apprehending criminals or restricting nuisances, was sometimes conceded to the corporation by the king. Early in the fourteenth century Edward III had given it jurisdiction in Southwark, for example, which had become a rendezvous for thieves.

Encouraged by the Queen's Council and frowned upon by the city authorities, the players continued until the plague, which was seldom entirely absent, caused a suspension of public assemblies in 1572. In Harrison's *Description of England*, under that year, is entered the annotation:

"Plaies are banished for a time out of London, lest the resort unto them should ingender a plague, or rather disperse it, being already begonne. Would to God these comon plaies were exiled for altogether, as siminaries of impiety." Puritans throughout the realm heartily endorsed his wish.

One of the strong arguments against the playhouses was that plays at first were presented on Sunday as well as other days. Many a clergyman, humiliated by the vacant seats before him, knowing well the crowds that were thronging in the direction of The Theatre, expressed sentiments similar to those of John Stockwood, in a sermon delivered in London on the 24th of August, 1578 in which he exclaimed: "Will not a filthy play with the blast of a

trumpet sooner call thither a thousand than an hour's tolling of a bell bring to the sermon a hundred?—nay, even here in the City, without it be at this place [Paul's Cross] and some other certain ordinary audience, where shall you find a reasonable company?—whereas if you resort to The Theatre, the Curtain, and other places of players in the City, you shall on the Lord's Day have these places, with many other that I cannot reckon, so full as possible they can throng."

In 1574 Elizabeth issued a special license to James Burbage and four members of the Earl of Leicester's Company granting them permission to exhibit stage plays in any part of England, "as well for the recreation of her loving subjects as for her own solace and enjoyment." The following year the Lord Mayor of London and his Council banished all players from the city. Under such circumstances there was no help for carrying the plays into the "Liberties," beyond the jurisdiction of hostile magistrates, yet within easy reach of pleasure-loving citizens.

Burbage set to work to erect the first playhouse in London, beyond the city walls, in a section known as Shoreditch and bordering on a park whither men were accustomed to resort to practise with the bow and arrow and where picnic parties often gathered. He leased ground for twenty-one years, with the provision that should he desire, the lease should be further extended for ten years longer; also it was agreed that he should expend as much as two hundred pounds in improvements and, if he were to continue in occupancy he must pay any fees incident to preparing a new contract when the lease expired. With the help of relatives he built the house known as The Theatre. The word theatre not before being associated with English playhouses, some contend that this was a shortened form of *amphitheatre* the old Roman word for the building where shows were held.

The Theatre was opened in 1576, the first structure to be raised in England for the presentation of plays. It is believed to have cost about seven hundred pounds, money having a far greater purchasing value then than now; it was open to the sky, save for a thatched roof projecting over the boxes which lined the walls except where the stage

was raised. The building is believed to have been circular; the stage extended out into the pit, which was unfloored and corresponded to the old courtyard of the inn.

Burbage had been a joiner before he became a member of Leicester's Company. This helped him to plan the new playhouse. Speaking of his having no precedent to follow, Matthews says: "He knew nothing about the theatres of Greece and Rome; and even if he had been familiar with their construction they would have given him no guidance. What he wanted was to have a place as commodious for the performance of plays as the inn yard which he was abandoning; and the playhouse which he put up may be described as an inn yard—without the inn itself. He may have been influenced also more or less by the rings for bull-baiting and bear-baiting—circular wooden amphitheatres with an open arena."¹

It is supposed that the Curtain was built the following year, although the exact date is unknown. London's second playhouse was smaller than The Theatre. The modern reader learns with surprise that its name had nothing whatever to do with a stage curtain, which was not in use at the time. Rather, the name was common in the vicinity, Curtain House, Curtain Road, Curtain Close, having suggested it.

As Ordish has well observed: "It was an easy matter for the corporation to banish the players from the city; it needed only unanimity of counsels and the issue of an order to accomplish that. But they could not overcome the love of the drama which had grown up with the development of the national character. The players had arrived at a stage of perfection in their art; the people had become accustomed to the stimulus and pleasure of dramatic representations, and not a mile or so of distance, nor the sense that they were evading the express will of responsible authority; nor the roughness displayed by the groundings, nor the fact that idle and dissolute characters inevitably haunted the playhouse; not even the real and terrible danger of the plague, could turn the Elizabethan playgoer from the pastime he loved. The erection of The Theatre within view of the city was less defiant than inevitable. It was an

outcome, although the city fathers knew it not, of those sports and pastimes which had been cultivated under the sanction and encouragement of the corporation for generations.”²

The Theatre has deep interest for Shakespearean lovers, since the supreme playwright became associated with the Burbage company here, some twenty years after its erection.

In 1587, Henslowe, who had been a dyer, a wool-dealer, an inn keeper and several things beside, observing the crowds that thronged around the Shoreditch playhouses, built another, called the Rose, south of the river, on Bankside, not far from the bear-baiting and the bull-baiting pits that never failed to attract numerous visitors. This playhouse was used by the Admiral's Men under Henslowe's management. Edward Alleyn, who married Henslowe's daughter, was for years their leading man. The Admiral's Men had previously played at The Curtain.

As the expiration of the lease drew near, the owner of the land whereon Burbage's theatre stood refused to comply with his original agreement. He contended that an extension of five years only could be permitted. It is thought that the London authorities were encouraging him to hold out in this matter. It so happened that shortly before Burbage had obtained an old hall in the Black Friars monastery which he had converted with great cost into a playhouse. But the protests against the opening of a theatre in this vicinity were so insistent that he was unable to carry out his plan of bringing his company thither.

Under such conditions James Burbage died, leaving his two sons, Cuthbert and Richard, to find a solution for these two problems. One small fortune was tied up in The Theatre, whose lease was soon to expire, another in the Blackfriars which, it appeared, could not be occupied as a theatre at all. A long quarrel ensued, the result being that during the landlord's absence from London Burbage had the timber and whatever else could be used again torn down and transported to Bankside south of the Thames, where the material was used in the construction of the famous Globe. Upon his return the landlord carried the case into

court, his argument being that the original lease had expired and a new one had not been negotiated—which was true. Possession seems to have proved nine-tenths of the law, for into the Globe was built whatever had been salvaged from the original Theatre.

The Globe was opened in 1599, where many a “first performance” was given of successful plays, written by Shakespeare and his colleagues. Richard Burbage played the leading part in some of the most famous dramas of the period. It was a sad blow to the stockholders, all members of the Company, when the beautiful playhouse caught fire in 1613, during the first presentation of *Henry VIII*. The New Globe was quickly erected on the same site, precaution being taken this time to make the roof over the boxes fire-proof.

The players meanwhile were housed at the Blackfriars, which had become their winter playhouse. The dilemma which this building presented: a ruinous loss if idle, a struggle with the corporation if occupied as a playhouse, had long since been solved by leasing it to the Boys of the Chapel Royal, or Her Majesty’s Boys of Blackfriars, as they had come to be called. They became a serious rival to the Lord Chancellor’s Company at the Globe and the Admiral’s Men, at the Rose. The Blackfriars was known as a private theatre, not because it excluded the public but probably because it looked to the Court for support. Because of slightly screened shafts at those in high position in the realm, even at the king himself, this Child’s Company was afterwards disbanded, after which Burbage obtained the place as winter quarters for his company, which played at the Globe during the summer. Here they found a home during the rebuilding of their playhouse after the fire of 1613.

A great outcry arose when the Burbage Company took over the Blackfriars as a winter playhouse and numerous were the complaints offered by the corporation and residents in the vicinity. A petition set forth: “There is daily such resort of people, and such multitudes of coaches (whereof many are hackney-coaches, bringing people of all sorts) that sometimes all our streets cannot contain them,

but that they clog up Ludgate also, in such sort that both they endanger the one the other, break down stalls, throw down men's goods from their shops, and the inhabitants there cannot come to their houses, nor bring in their necessary provisions of beer, wood, coal or hay, nor the tradesmen or shopkeepers utter their wares, nor the passengers go to the common water stairs without danger of their lives and limbs, and these inconveniences last every day in winter from one or two of the clock till six at night."

However, James I was extending favor to the players, this company being known as the King's Men, and the plays went merrily on; those objecting were left to voice their discontent, well grounded as this communication would indicate it to have been.

Henslowe had built the Fortune in the vicinity of The Theatre before this was dismantled, with a hope of winning some of the patronage which flocked to it and to the Curtain. On the south bank, the Swan and later, the Hope, were built. The Swan, built by Langley, a goldsmith, is said to have been a beautiful structure. It was closed by royal edict not long after its opening, Queen Elizabeth having been highly incensed by a play called *The Isle of Dogs* which was indiscreetly presented there.

Travellers from other lands commented upon the remarkable appearance made by these high theatres that rose to the north and south of London. Flags streamed from their summits on days when plays were presented. Except in the case of the Blackfriars, which was equipped with artificial lighting, the performances took place in the afternoon, daylight streaming down through the open roof. Take it all in all, there may be more truth than at first would seem reasonable in the observation of a recent writer who maintains that we are likely to imagine the differences between Elizabethan playhouses and players and those of today to have been greater than they actually were.

¹ Matthews: *Shakespeare as a Playwright*, p. 27.

² Ordish: *London Theatres*, p. 41.

WHEN BURBAGE PLAYED

“When Burbage played, the stage was bare
 Of fount and temple, tower and stair;
 Two backwords eked a battle out;
 Two supers made a rabble rout;
 The throne of Denmark was a chair!

And yet, no less, the audience there
 Thrilled through all changes of Despair,
 Hope, Anger, Fear, Delight and Doubt
 When Burbage played!

This is the Actor's gift; to share
 All moods, all passions, nor to care
 One whit for scene, so he without
 Can lead men's minds the roundabout,
 Stirred as of old those hearers were
 When Burbage played!”

—*Austin Dobson.*

AN EPITAPH UPON MR. RICHARD BURBAGE,
THE PLAYER

“This Life's a play, scene'd out by Nature's Arte,
 Where every man hath his allotted parte.
 This man hath now (as many men can tell)
 Ended his part, and he hath acted well.
 The Play now ended, think his grave to be
 The retiring house of his sad Tragedie,
 Where to give his fame this, be not afraid,
 Here lies the best Tragedian ever played.”

SHAKESPEAREAN AUDIENCES

THE hundred years which intervened between the death of Columbus, whose discoveries had dazzled Europe, and the beginning of Shakespeare's life in London, had been characterized by remarkable transformations. For half a century explorers tried to fit the newly found lands into their preconceived notions, threading every inlet and river to find a route to the enchanted East. Sobered by their privations and experiences among savages, they gradually adjusted themselves to conditions as they were, conquest and colonization rapidly following on the era of adventure in the western hemisphere. Jamestown was settled in 1607, about the time that *King Lear* and *Macbeth* were drawing large houses at the Globe.

Nor were changes visible alone in geographical fields and trade-routes. At the outset of that momentous hundred years, the civilized world still clung tenaciously to the teachings of the Universal Church; before the death of Elizabeth the majority of Englishmen had forever departed from them. The Bible had been placed in the hands of the people, with the result that discrepancies between Christ's teachings and the practices of churchmen set the masses to searching the Scriptures for themselves. The Reformation followed, with its well known consequences. The Renaissance inaugurated an era of classical revival, the learning of the ancients being studied to ascertain what light it might shed upon current affairs. Mediæval fetters were broken and the human mind exulted in its newly attained liberty.

The feeling of apprehension with which England and other European countries—notably France—had viewed Spain during this period was paralleled in the last years of the nineteenth century by the attitude of other European countries toward Russia. Due to the vast geographical extent of both lands, foreign nations had gained an exaggerated idea of their military strength. The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 struck a severe blow to Spanish



"RED BULL" STAGE

Note the absence of "properties" and the balcony effect of the "rear stage"

pride, for it did much to dispel this erroneous conception regarding its maritime power. In England the hearts of men were stirred to possibilities before undreamed, since the seemingly impossible had actually come to pass.

Prosperity had led to a greater degree of social comfort in the British isle; it had also resulted in a leisure unknown in earlier times when the gaining of a livelihood had been precarious. The growth of shipping, the expansion of trade, meant the amassing of wealth. The English sovereign, save for winter visits, ordinarily dwelt in Westminster, but he always turned to London when in need of financial aid.

In place of settled, routine existence, which has often enwrapped humanity for generations, change and transformation were visible on every hand; instead of a rather dull, drab life, Elizabethan London swarmed with variety and color. Along the river stood ships that had touched lands across the sea; in the streets and "ordinaries," as the restaurants and cafes were called, the swaggering soldier was to be seen, and the sailor, with his tales, half-truth, half-fiction, of strange countries he had seen. No ruler ever loved pageantry and pomp more than Queen Elizabeth, whose coming and going was always marked by considerable demonstration of royal grandeur.

Although an age wherein scholarship was valued (cite for example the Queen herself and the University Wits who held in scorn those who lacked their schooling), culture was but partially apprehended. If the testimony of contemporaries is to be trusted, Elizabeth had inherited a somewhat sulphurous vocabulary from her robust father which came to her relief in moments of excitement. Vice, immorality, disease, physical functions—all these were discussed with a frankness and openness which seems to us appalling. Nevertheless, there is a strength in plain speech which dissembling and insinuation lack.

Altogether, it is not difficult to understand why this period found in drama its natural expression. The people loved action; they would not have been disposed to seek pleasure in gazing at statuary or paintings. Life interested them tremendously. Life as they lived it was engrossing,

stimulating, absorbing. For their recreation they delighted to look upon tense situations, thrilling experiences, overwhelming passions, all crowded together in a short play. They laughed and frowned, grew angry, gloated over revenge, approved of punishment justly administered and, in short, suffered with the suffering and rejoiced with them who rejoiced.

It is any summer afternoon in any of the first years that ushered in the seventeenth century. The supreme playwright is still delivering to his company, known now as the King's Men, at least a couple of plays annually. A holiday allows the people of London, which boasts its two hundred thousand, to spread out in every direction seeking recreation, each according to his inclination. Some visit relatives in hamlets not far away; some turn to Finsburg Fields, north of the old walls. Many throng toward the river, fascinating with its masted ships that at a distance resemble a forest. A variety of amusement is to be found on Bankside. For those who must have blood and thunder, there are the bull and the bear-baiting pits. The bulls will roar with anger and with pain as they are harried by the dogs. Some of the animals will be torn and blood will flow. Soldiers and sailors and fellows of firm fibre who have heart for shows of this kind will bet on the endurance of the beasts and excitement of fighting and betting will rise to a high pitch. Probably the majority preferred less brutal sport but even the Queen was entertained by bear-baiting during her celebrated visit to Kenilworth; so it is plain the bull pits would not lack for patrons.

“The numerous landing-stages or stairs all along the riverbank, from old Barge-house stairs, at the western limit of Paris Garden manor, to the dock near St. Mary Overy's towards the bridge, attest the fondness of the Elizabethans for the diversions of the gardens on the Bankside. In the summer especially, on fine days, the succession of boats coming across the water from all points of the town, the bustle of the landing-stairs, the gaiety of parties of pleasure-seekers mingled with loud disputes with the scullers, afforded an animated scene in the life of by-gone days, which it is extremely pleasant to recall. On the bank of

Paris Garden manor itself there were landing stairs at distances of about every fifty yards—Bargehouse Stairs, Bull Stairs, Marigold Stairs, Parish Gardens Stairs, at the end of Parish Garden Lane, and Falcon Stairs, near the famous Falcon Inn. The visitors were not always bound for the pleasures of Bankside; sometimes their errand was some business in the villages or towns within walking distance in Surrey; and if on pleasure bent, they would frequently, especially in the long summer days, leave the attractions of Parish Gardens behind them and pass on into St. George's Fields, where they could hear the larks singing, see the cattle browsing, buy fruit and milk at farmhouses near, and picnic on the grass. . . . All that we know of the Bankside in Elizabeth's time tends to show that it became ever increasingly popular as a pleasure-resort; and as its star waxed, that of the northern playground at Finsbury waned. The little trip across the water—so dear to the English nature—with the little spice of adventure and added excitement, was probably at the bottom of this development of popular favour.”¹

Our interest lies not with the picnic parties nor yet with those intent upon the animal pits. We follow instead those who would witness the new play, said to have pleased the king so greatly that he recently penned a note of appreciation to its author—an inexpensive manner of dispensing royal favour often practised by this ruler, testifying to his Scotch thrift, although he could lavish money enough on favorites.

The flag is flying over the Globe, indicating that the King's Men will present a play at two o'clock. Later in the year, plays began somewhat earlier but light lingers long during an English summer. Although an hour before the performance, people are already being admitted. A penny admits to the pit, where the groundings stand unless they choose to sit upon the floor of earth. Until the play begins they play at dice, eat apples, crack nuts, quarrel, tell stories and drink beer, which can be obtained in some of the pits on draught. Servants are admitted, paying the usual penny at the door, another to entrance to the tiers of boxes and a third for a seat. Or they may obtain a stool for a shilling.

When their masters arrive, they will thus find places reserved for them. If sufficiently wealthy and prominent, they may claim a place for their stools on the very stage itself. The young bloods often entered late for the purpose of creating a stir and causing people to observe their fashionable attire, nor would they hesitate to interrupt the play by their noise and crowding in amongst spectators already too numerous for the convenience of the players.

The stage is draped in black, which gives sufficient indication that a tragedy is to be rendered. The stage upon which Elizabethan actors presented their parts was wholly unlike our own. It extended far out in the pit, so that the players must come forward some few yards after they entered the room ere they reached the spot where their lines were spoken. A curtain screened off what is known as the inner stage, a room where domestic scenes or other interiors could be shown as soon as those in the front of the outer stage had ceased speaking. The aperture closed by this curtain might be twenty feet in width, while doors flanked either side to give actors easy egress and exit. A balcony above served many purposes. The fair Juliet might look down on a passionate Romeo, or senators might appear on the walls of a besieged city. Above the balcony were the huts, whence heavenly personages might issue or celestial beings be let down or drawn up to the skies. This rear portion of the stage was shaped so as to present not only a front view, but two sides. This made it possible for Romeo to stand with his side instead of his back to the audience when he entreated Juliet.

Little scenery was attempted. A sign informed the audience that the scene was laid in Venice. Spectators did not trust to the eye so much as to the ear to learn where events were occurring. Today when a garden is shown, with blossoming flowers, gravel walks and green turf, it is unnecessary for the conversation to open: "This is a beauteous garden"—or words to this effect; but when three trees stood stiffly before the audience it was well that Rosalind should utter the elucidating remark: "This is the Forest of Arden." Otherwise, it might have been any forest or a shady park or famous grove or home of the fairies. In

other words, the Elizabethan dramatist knew the limitations under which he wrote and in a measure accommodated himself to them. As a matter of fact, it is plain in many instances that neither audience nor dramatist cared exactly where the event was taking place: what was done was of far greater concern than where it was done. And there was often rapid whisking about from one place to another, all of which would seem bewildering to us now.

Not only was there little or no scenery, but no women appeared upon the boards of Shakespeare's time. The part of Juliet was taken by a comely youth, while the rôle of the Egyptian queen who captivated Julius Cæsar as well as Mark Anthony, was likewise played by a boy decked out in appropriate finery.

If a bed could not be rolled out from the inner stage at the right moment, or a great rock be set down when needed, or any other heavy property be provided at the crucial moment, at least it could be set in place before the play opened and none would be thereby disturbed.

While scenery was neglected, costumes were elaborate. This may have been due to the fact that the royal wardrobe was drawn upon for costumes when plays were to be shown before the Queen. Elizabeth's three thousand gowns, of which almost every English history makes mention, included not only those designed for her but all that her predecessors had left—an accumulation reaching over many reigns. When historical plays were presented at Court, the players wore robes which the royal personages depicted had themselves once donned. Sometimes apparel was given to players in part payment for their services in Court plays, such reward being highly appreciated we may be sure. The luxurious costuming of Court plays undoubtedly influenced that of public theatres. The age was fond of gorgeous apparel and extravagant dress, which alone would explain the careful attention given to theatrical costumes.

Lusty blasts from the trumpets give warning that the performance will at once begin, but the noise in the pit and the loud talking of those who demand seats upon the stage drown the words of the prologue. The antics of the comedians and the coarse humor of the servants is included to

appease the burly chaps of the pit, who require very broad fun to entertain them after long speeches which they do not always understand. They are prompt to manifest their pleasure or disapproval and no greater compliment was ever paid to Shakespeare's art than the hushed attention of the groundlings who forgot to crack nuts, stopped drinking beer, throwing dice and otherwise diverting themselves as they watched the performance in tense excitement. The loud laughing and talking, the eating and drinking all suggest the modern circus rather than the theatre.

The theatre having no elaborate scenery to shift, no settings to make up, there were no long waits between acts. Music was sometimes played between them but the movement went along with little delay. A main plot and one or two subsidiary plots were carried rapidly on. By means of the chronicle plays the untutored learned their history. Through the influence of the stage they acquired pride in country, respect for women and some notion of courtesy. To witness the plays of Elizabethan England was an education in itself, and when the hundreds of spectators had lived and died with the heroes for two thrilling hours, we may well believe that the few minutes spent on the cool river ferrying back to the city must have served to bring them back once more to the world of reality.

¹ Ordish: *Early London Theatres*, p. 254.

CHARACTERISTICS OF SHAKESPEARE

IT was once the custom to look upon Homer's poems as scarcely to be explained. Out of obscurity they emerged, darkness closing in after them. The critical scholarship of the last century has forever dispelled any such conception of them. Not only do they testify to dawning Greek civilization; they reveal at the same time a dying Cretan culture. Songs had been sung and tales told for countless generations ere several became linked together in the *Iliad* and in the *Odyssey*. Similarly with Shakespeare: few longer insist on regarding him as meteoric, with little to announce his coming and nothing to explain it. While genius cannot be explained, it is always possible to account for the form in which it manifests. It appears only when the way has been prepared for it. Despite the fascination which some still find in conceiving the world in which we live as having been suddenly evolved from nothing and forthwith given finality, the open-minded find greater beauty and dignity in the mystery of growth. So, in considering the sweet bard of Avon, many of his ardent admirers find the deepest satisfaction in tracing his development from the earliest plays to his mature achievements.

When he came first to London, just emerging into manhood and fresh from rustic scenes and interests, English drama had not yet taken definite form. Lyly had composed plays well suited to the purpose for which they were designed: presentation before highly selective audiences, by children, organized into companies and already trained as choristers. It is safe to say that the majority who were writing plays in the last decade of the sixteenth century had drifted into such literary expression for the simple reason that plays were popular and found a readier sale than other literary works. Peele might have become a writer of considerable merit had he confined himself to poetry; several others who essayed drama should have been creating romances, which they spoiled by giving them dramatic form.

Marlowe alone had brought strength and vigor into his plays, but his early promise was shattered by a tragic and premature death. Mediæval traditions still fettered Elizabethan drama and some of these temporarily dominated Shakespeare; others survived throughout his literary career.

In the absence of detailed information as to the poet's life and in what capacity he first became associated with the company of players with which we presently find him allied, it is reasonable to suppose that he began as an actor of inferior rank and that as time went on he was entrusted to revamp old plays which belonged to the company but had become too antiquated for further use. Chronicle plays had already won their way with London audiences, eager for further light upon their historic past, especially for such periods as might add glamour to an age which had definite reason to feel pleased with its own achievements. There is reason to believe that the young dramatist's work began in remodeling old comedies and history plays and those which felt earliest the imprint of his efforts show slight advance in point of workmanship nor do they give particular promise of what the future had in store for their reviser. In one respect, however, exception is to be made. Shakespeare's inborn poetical genius led to the introduction of lyrics in these revamped plays. Lyly had made similar use of song, having trained singers ready at hand. Shakespeare's debt to him is certain and it is not unlikely that songs were set into his first plays when they were presented before the Queen, choristers being borrowed for the occasion. However that may be, the quality of the lyrics calls immediate attention to them.

It was fortunate that during the time of his apprenticeship, extending over some years, the inexperienced playwright had the restraint of historical fact to curb his soaring imagination.

Then came the period of merry comedies, bubbling forth from the sheer joy of life. We can visualize the writer grown confident with his first efforts which had at least proved adequate for his company's use. Now, surer of himself, he looks around and seizes upon such subjects as

give opportunity for fun and good spirits to display themselves. Throughout his life he experimented, but his experiments are highly elucidative since they throw light upon the uncertain dramatic construction prevailing at the time.

Presently a change came over the writer. Whether it was the passing of the boy, lent for so brief a while, which closed the portals of hope; whether the fickleness of one who seems to have inspired many of the sonnets, or both perhaps, this at least we know: never again was Shakespeare to turn off the same rollicking plays. Instead there came the "grave comedies" and the great tragedies. Hamlet, sickened with the revelation of his mother's infidelity, confronts us. "As short—" one starts to say, and he instantly adds "as woman's love!" It is possible to read too much into the words—or too little.

After Shakespeare had experienced remarkable success with his greatest plays, new experiments were made by him and earlier lessons sometimes forgotten or ignored. How else can one explain the carelessness of some of the late plays? The public is fickle at best; new ideas, undreamed in the last years of the sixteenth century, animated men of the seventeenth. New writers were gaining popularity. Several plays, rejected as his, yet bearing slight evidences of his workmanship, indicate, if anything at all, that he consented to review them in order to lend the prestige of his name to productions accepted by his company. It is probable that this was as far as he cared to go in yielding to new conditions which the times laid upon those who would keep the popular ear. Nevertheless, in his last comedy he proved full well his ability to meet the prevailing requirements, far surpassing in content the plays which were then holding the stage.

Great libraries devoted to Shakespeare alone have come into being. Every line he ever penned, or to speak more accurately, every line now attributed to him, has been scrutinized and considered; every character has been analyzed; every dramatic situation pondered. It is difficult to suggest any question that has not already found an exponent to elucidate it. The flowers he mentioned, the herbs

he included, what he said about stars, streams, brooks, and seas, all this has been duly set down. To attempt therefore to summarize briefly Shakespeare's contribution to English drama is difficult. A lifetime might be spent in weighing our debt to him and in comparing him with his contemporaries.

Still, the magnitude of the task need not prevent us from approaching it from some angles. We know, for example, that Shakespeare never troubled to invent a plot when one lay ready to his hand. In many cases we know exactly where he found the materials for his dramas, to what extent he made use of them and what portions he himself created. In instances where we are not aware of his sources, nevertheless we have reason to feel that they have merely disappeared. That he could invent his plot and do it admirably is proved by *The Tempest* and by *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. That he could start with an old plot and abandon it shortly, creating a new story, is demonstrated in *As You Like It* and other plays that might be cited quite as appropriately.

If the query be raised: What constitutes Shakespearean comedy? we may find it instructive to treat it by elimination and see what it is not. It immediately becomes plain that it is not what constituted comedy for Aristophanes, for example. The humour of *The Clouds* consists in no small measure in poking fun at the Athenian philosopher, Socrates. The satirizing of contemporary theories, social or political, was not adopted by Shakespeare. Humour is produced in the *Comedy of Errors* by mistaken identity, a device used by him several times, but in general his comedies are romantic in kind, amusing incidents producing the merriment.

Tragedy was understood by Shakespeare as something unlike what had passed for it with some of his predecessors. He realized that tragedy results from inherent weakness or ill conceived actions and that it is brought about by the victim himself rather than by circumstances, although circumstance may be a contributing factor and usually is. Dr. Bradley,* who has penetrated as deeply as any into Shakespearean tragedy and set his observations in incisive and convincing words, says that for Shakespeare "tragedy is a

story of exceptional calamity leading to the death of a man in high estate" and that the story includes "human actions producing exceptional calamity." He goes on to say, very significantly, "That men may start a course of events but can neither calculate nor control it is a tragic fact."

A little investigation will show that Shakespeare's hero is always a person of consequence: often a king, like Lear; or a leader, like Brutus; or at least sprung from a noble house, like Romeo. These men of high estate are usually possessed of noble qualities, yet they plunge on to ruin through some inherent weakness: Macbeth is courageous, exposing himself to danger with truest bravery; he meets his ruin because treasonable ambition drowns other passions. Antony knows the call of duty and has often answered it; he yields to self-indulgence. Coriolanus is undone by self-pride and Lear by vanity. Othello, a very prince among men, becomes a mere child in the hands of the unscrupulous Iago. No other dramatist portrays such tremendous conflict between what Ward calls "the will and the obstacle." Sometimes the contending forces are wholly without the character—cite, for example, Romeo struggling against the traditional hatred of the Capulets and Montagues; sometimes, as in the case of Hamlet, the strife is wholly within. Sometimes nobility of soul struggles against seeming plausibility, as when Othello's natural sense of fair-dealing is over-ruled by insidious insinuations of Iago.

"What Shakespeare sees in human nature and human struggles, he sees as it is. Instinctively . . . he threw open to modern tragedy a range of treatment hitherto unreached in breadth or height, and set the national drama in its noblest forms free from restrictions to which it could not submit anew without a sense of having renounced its enfranchisement. . . . But that which has given the greatest and most enduring potency to his influence upon our national drama, and in ever-widening circles upon the modern Western drama in general, is his own supreme gift as a dramatist—the power of characterization. In the drawing of characters ranging over almost every type of humanity, in which the experience of succeeding generations has recognized a fit subject for the art of either the tragic or

the comic dramatist, he infinitely surpassed all his predecessors, and remains absolutely without a peer; and it was in this direction that he pointed the way which the English drama could henceforth not desert except by becoming untrue to itself. . . . His power of characterization was to him a gift like that of Hephæstus to the son of Thetis—it made him not only the foremost of the Danai, but the one invincible among them.”¹

A survival from the Middle Ages to be found in nearly all Shakespearean plays is the intermingling of the grotesque with the sublime. Stand today before a great Gothic cathedral and marvel at the beauty of biblical characters carved in stone; then observe the grotesques that look out at you, here and there. Remember the portrayal of the Passion in the Miracle plays; then think of the horse-play which was carried on by Herod and other unrevered characters. By his transforming touch, the great poet made the grotesque element serve his purpose, but ordinarily he did not eliminate it.

Regarding the dramatic construction exemplified by these plays, Baker, in his instructive discussion of the subject says: “Shakespeare’s experience with his audiences of course revealed to him the permanent principles of dramatic composition. It showed that mere fable, story, is not enough in play-writing. For the best results there must be clear exposition, which depends on underlying unity—which in turn depends on carefully considered structure. That structure, in its turn, rests on proportion and emphasis. The fable or story before it can become, dramatically speaking, plot must be so proportioned as to tell itself clearly and effectively within the space of two or two and one-half hours; and this exposition must be emphasized with regard to the tastes and prejudices of the audience, as well as the artistic purpose of the dramatist, if it is on the one hand to be differentiated as high comedy, tragedy, melodrama or farce and not to remain hodge-podge. Shakespeare’s practice proves, too, in regard to the underlying principles of dramatic composition that a play succeeds best when a central figure or group of figures, or a unifying idea, focuses the attention of the spectator. Shakespeare’s

experience shows, moreover, that a play must have movement, gained by initial swift, clear exposition and a skilful use of suspense and climax. And finally, this body of farces, chronicle plays, comedies and tragedies demonstrates that in drama characterization is the ladder by which we mount from lower to higher in the so-called forms, and that a predetermined point of view is the means by which the dramatist so emphasizes his material as to differentiate it in form."²

That Shakespeare was more interested in men than in theories is apparent to any student of his plays. Volumes have been written to prove him from his dramas to have been an atheist and a religious man, a Catholic and a Protestant, aristocratic and democratic; and it is possible to cite passages in support on any of these assumptions. Certain it is that he never loses an opportunity to voice his contempt for mobs, his abiding patriotism, his scorn of shams and hypocrisies. He never preaches, like certain of the Victorians, but he inculcates moral truths in a far better way. How much sham and pretense are swept into the discard by these few lines:

"This is the excellent foppery of the world, that, when we are sick in fortune—often the surfeits of our own behavior—we make guilty of our disasters the sun, moon, the stars, as if we were villains of necessity, fools by heavenly compulsion, knaves, thieves, and preachers by spherical predominance, drunkards, liars, and adulterers by an enforced obedience of planetary influence, and all that we are evil in, by a divine thrusting on."

It is his fidelity to truthful portrayal, his sanity and his universality that have led humanity to associate his writings with the Scriptures. Perhaps the greatest tribute that can be paid him is the fact that his plays are still presented to enthusiastic audiences. Dr. Johnson has expressed his enduring fame in words suited to the subject: "The stream of time, which is continually washing the dissoluble fabrics of other poets, passes without injury by the adamant of Shakespeare."

* A. C. Bradley: *Shakespearean Tragedy*.

¹ Ward: *English Dramatic Lit.*, Vol. II, pp. 272; 293.

² Baker: *Dev. of Shakespeare as a Dramatist*, p. 311.

THE ENGLISH CHRONICLE PLAYS

A COPYRIGHT today enables the dramatist to control the use which shall be made of his plays. His interest remains in them and it would be impossible for a producer to alter them or present them in ways objectionable to the writer. Such protection is of comparatively recent origin and was wholly unknown to Tudor England. When Henslowe, or any other theatrical manager of his age, paid from five to ten pounds sterling for a new play—and such sums were given only to writers of established reputation—the production belonged to him as completely as any other article of purchase and might be treated as he saw fit. Naturally new plays were kept on the boards as long as their popularity endured, but as Elizabethan audiences craved novelty in guise if not in theme, plays as well as fashions went out of date. In course of time considerable money became tied up in old plays, and it was customary to set some aspiring writer to work them over. Sometimes actors reshaped them to their own satisfaction; sometimes playwrights of recognized ability were engaged to renew the life of such antiquated stock in trade. It was in such capacity as this that Shakespeare became occupied not very long after his arrival in London and it is supposed that *Titus Andronicus* was the first play to be revamped by him.

In 1592 a rival company put on a play called *Henry VI*, written by Peele. To win their share of public patronage, Shakespeare's company decided to make use of two old plays of Marlowe's which had come into their possession and Shakespeare hurriedly worked them over. These were *The Contention between Two Famous Houses of York and Lancaster* and *The True Tragedy of Richard Duke of York*. The first was presented in 1594 as part one of a new play entitled *Henry VI* and the second, which completed it, was given the following year. Later Peele's *Henry VI* was purchased by Shakespeare's company and he made it introductory to the other two parts; so that we now have *Henry VI*

in three parts. Less than one-fourth of the entire production is supposed to be the work of Shakespeare and the chief interest of the play for us today is that it exemplifies the period during which he served an apprenticeship which made him ready for his works of maturity. In these early years he still showed close adherence to his predecessors, and Marlowe's influence was especially strong.

Each age builds on those preceding and it is possible to detect traces of mediæval drama in the plays of the Elizabethans. In the old miracle plays coarse humor and buffoonery had crept in by the side of sublimity and pathos. In course of time these elements resolved themselves into a major and one or more minor plots. Latterly, Marlowe had given a sense of unity in his plays by one dominating figure which in a measure unified detached scenes. Instances might be multiplied of Shakespeare's debt to those who had preceded him not only directly but two centuries past.

A rapidly growing sense of nationality made the English people particularly interested in plays concerned with important periods of their historical development, and the success of *Henry VI* caused Shakespeare to turn to Holinshed's Chronicles for material with which to continue the story. *Henry VI* pertained to that vital period wherein was kindled the fire that was destined to embroil England in civil war for half a century, as the descendents of Edward III struggled to exterminate one another. In the Temple Garden, in London, the supporters of the two rival houses of Lancaster and York adopted the emblems which alone invested a selfish, bloody strife with some romantic glamour. Richard Plantagenet and Somerset, Warrick and Vernon are in conversation.

Plan. Let him that is a true-born gentleman,
 And stands upon the honor of his birth,
 If he suppose that I have pleaded truth,
 From off this briar pluck a white rose with me.

Som. Let him that is no coward, nor a flatterer,
 But dare maintain the party of the truth,
 Pluck a red rose from off this thorn with me.

- War.* I love no colors ; and, without all color
Of base insinuating flattery,
I pluck this white rose with Plantagenet.
- Suf.* I pluck this red rose with young Somerset
And say, withal, I think he held the right.

Such was the beginning of a quarrel that set one lord at another's throat until the old nobility of England perished like the soldiers who sprang up when Jason sowed the dragon's teeth, blindly fighting one another to the death.

The old play which gave Shakespeare something to start with in his *Richard III* is thought to have contributed little to it as it now stands. The work is believed by many to have been largely his own and it showed something entirely new as it came from his hand. The monster, who "wades through slaughter to a throne," is a self-confessed villain. That such is the case indicates the immaturity of the author, who in his later plays would have trusted to the action to convey this to the audience. The stern will of the Duke of Gloster who deliberately kills whomever stands in the pathway of his desires is fascinating, even though he destroys the last ray of sympathy an audience might extend to him. The only possible excuse for his cold blooded procedure is to be found in the hatred his deformed and misshaped body has aroused in him. He touches upon this in the first soliloquy :

I that am curtail'd of this fair proportion,
Cheated of feature by dissembling nature,
Deform'd, unfinished, sent before my time
Into this breathing world, scarce half made up,
And that so lamely and unfashionable,
That dogs bark at me as I halt by them ;—
Why, I, in this weak piping time of peace,
Have no delight to pass away the time,
Unless to see my shadow in the sun,
And descant on mine own deformity :
And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover,
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain,
And hate the idle pleasures of these days.

Plots have I laid, inductions dangerous,
By drunken prophecies, libels, and dreams,
To set my brother Clarence and the King
In deadly hate, the one against the other.

Richard's transcending villainy is repeatedly demonstrated. He incites the King—Edward IV—against their brother, the Duke of Clarence. Meeting his brother Clarence on his way to the Tower under guard, he offers him every promise of help for an early deliverance; then, as the Duke trustingly accompanies the officer, Gloster says:

Simple, plain Clarence! I do love thee so,
That I will shortly send thy soul to Heaven.

Although the King has issued a release for Clarence, Gloster contrives to have him murdered in the Tower, and as King Edward IV lies dying, Gloster announces the death of Clarence in such a way as to throw suspicion on the Queen, while the sovereign, weakened by illness, dies under the shock. As the Lady Anne accompanies the dead body of her father-in-law, like her husband slain by the hand of Gloster, this deep-dyed villain has the temerity to interrupt her and by subtle steps, compel her to believe, in spite of herself, that it has been for love of her that he has removed them. Then when she falls under the curious spell of his indomitable will, he exults to himself over his stroke of diplomacy:

Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?
Was ever woman in this humour won?
I'll have her, but I will not keep her long,
What! I, that kill'd her husband and his father,
To take her in her heart's extremest hate;
With curses in her mouth, tears in her eyes,
The bleeding witness of my hatred by, . . .
And yet to win her—all the world to nothing! Ha!

Those who have helped him to usurp the throne he lays low, like the rest. So long as the little princes live, his position is perilous. So they are smothered by a hireling.

At length, when it seems as though no fate could be direful enough for one sufficiently callous to work such woe, the

Duke of Richmond—known to us later as Henry VII—musters troops and attacks Richard III on Bosworth Field in 1485. The night before the battle Richard sees the ghosts of all his victims pass before him in his sleep. There is a trace of Kyd's vengeance-crying ghosts in this.

Moulton emphasizes the marvellous study of Nemesis the play affords. "These four Nemesis Actions, it will be observed, are not separate trains of incident going on side by side, they are linked together into a system, the law of which is seen to be that those who triumph in one Nemesis become the victims of the next; so that the whole suggests a 'chain of destruction' like that binding together the orders of the brute creation which live by preying upon one another. When Clarence perished it was the King who dealt the doom and the Queen's party who triumphed: they having been assenting parties to the measures against Clarence (however little they may have contemplated the bloody issue to which those measures have been brought by the intrigues of Gloster). The wheel of Nemesis goes round and the King's death follows the death of his victim, and the Queen's kindred are naked to the vengeance of their enemies, and Hastings is left to exult. Again the wheel of Nemesis revolves, and Hastings at the moment of his highest exultation is hurled to destruction, while Buckingham stands by to point the moral with a gibe. Once more the wheel goes round, and Buckingham hears similar gibes addressed to himself and points the same moral in his own person. Thus the portion of the drama we have so far considered yields us a pattern within a pattern, a series of Nemesis Actions woven into a complete underplot by a connecting-link which is also Nemesis."¹

Shakespearean audiences found a satisfaction in this play which is sometimes lost upon us now. The great Queen, fifth of her line, still ruled the land. It was her grandfather, Henry Tudor, who had founded the dynasty, cutting down Richard, the usurper. England's greatness had taken shape under the Tudors and a play which recalled to them the beginning of peace and prosperity was bound to call forth a hearty response from the people. As Richard promises:

We will unite the White Rose and the Red—
 Smile Heaven upon this fair conjunction,
 That long hath frown'd upon their enmity!
 What traitor hears me and says not Amen?

We can hear the applause that these closing lines must have awakened.

“Of all Shakespeare’s chronicle-plays, *Richard III* has had the most undeniable and enduring popularity. . . . The reasons for this abiding popularity are not far to seek. The play may be what it has been called, ‘thoroughly melodramatic in conception and execution’; but it is a most moving melodrama, stiffened by the sinister figure of Richard, stern of will, knowing what he wants and why he wants it and how to get it—a type of remorseless depravity and of ruthless ambition, an inconceivable monster of misdirected energy. Alone in the study today we may dismiss him as excessive, as unconvincing, as out of nature, as a stage villain daubed in harsh colors; but when we sit massed in the theater even now the violent volition of this monster still carries us along.”²

Ten English history plays were written in all, the additional ones being *King John*, a revision of *The Troublesome Reign of King John*, *Henry IV* in two parts, *Henry V*, and long years after, near the close of his active career, *Henry VIII*, written in collaboration with Fletcher.

Richard II followed *Richard III*, having for its central figure a character as weak as the other had been strong. There is also lack of action in the play and substitution of philosophical discourse. It is inconceivable that Richard III or Henry V would have faced the danger of being deposed with the words:

What must the King do now, Must he submit?
 The King shall do it. Must he be depos'd?
 The King shall be contented. Must he lose
 The name of King? o' God's name, let it go:
 I'll give my jewels for a set of beads,
 My gorgeous palace for a hermitage,
 My gay apparel for an alms-man's gown . . .
 And my large kingdom for a little grave.

Better to die fighting against all odds than give such evidence of inability to keep power, once having it.

In plot development, metrical verse and comprehension of that mentality which "finds its chief happiness in being unhappy," Shakespeare's expanding genius is to be seen.

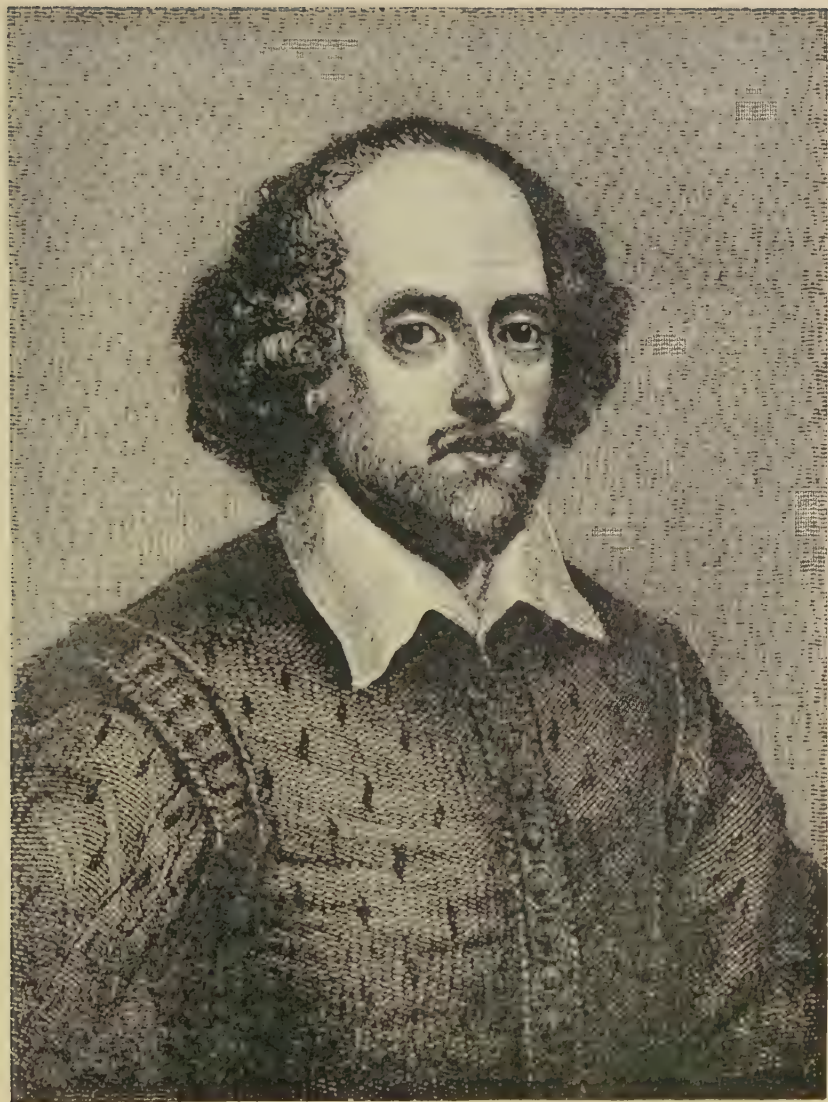
King John reached back farthest in point of time; although written after these other plays, it is characterized by confusion. Perhaps this is due to the absence of such a dominating character as binds the two Richards together in a sense of unity. It is evident that the author made extensive use of such material as came to his hand. However, the tender scene where the gentle disposition of Arthur melts the heart of Hubert, who has come to put out his eyes with red-hot irons, is characteristically Shakesperean.

Well, see to live; I will not touch thine eyes
For all the treasure that thine uncle owes;
Yet am I sworn, and I did purpose, boy,
With this same very iron to burn them out. . . .

Your uncle must not know but you are dead;
I'll fill these dogged spies with false reports;
And, pretty child, sleep doubtless and secure
That Hubert for the wealth of all the world
Will not offend thee.

Nothing attests to Shakespeare's immaturity at the time he was concerned with these historical plays more than his treatment of women. The portrayal of the queens is notoriously poor. In strong contrast is the fine delineation of Queen Katherine in *Henry VIII*, written after his best work had been done.

It was in *Henry IV* and *Henry V* that the power of the great dramatist began to manifest more definitely. As a matter of fact, the two parts of *Henry IV* serve only as an introduction for *Henry V*, the gay young prince being first shown with rollicking companions for the very purpose of throwing into strong contrast his later fibre. Indeed, in so many words the popular young prince prepares us for the transformation we shall see in the words he utters in the first part of *Henry IV*, after some of his madcap associates have left him:



WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

I know you all, and will a while uphold
The unyok'd humor of your idleness:
Yet herein will I imitate the sun
Who doth permit the base contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world,
That when he please again to be himself,
Being wanted, he may be more wondered at,
By breaking through the foul and ugly mists
Of vapours that did seem to strangle him.
If all the year were playing holidays
To sport would be as tedious as to work;
But when they seldom come, they wish'd for come,
And nothing pleaseth but rare accidents.
So when this loose behaviour I throw off,
And pay the debt I never promised,
By how much better than my word I am
By so much shall I falsify men's hopes;
And, like bright metal on a sullen ground,
My reformation, glittering o'er my fault,
Shall show more goodly, and attract more eyes
Than that which hath no foil to set it off.

The mature character of Henry V is one of the finest ever delineated by Shakespeare, who evidently admired the part and threw his enthusiasm into fashioning a man worthy of veneration.

A chorus is used before each act to bridge over the lapse of time and fill intervening gaps. The animated picture of the departure of the English fleet for France, at the opening of the third act, must have gladdened the heart of every old salt who heard it, and charmed the ears of all who gloried in a navy that had dealt defeat to Philip II but a few years before.

Suppose you have seen
The well-appoint'd King at Hampton pier
Embark his royalty; and his brave fleet
With silken streamers the young Phœbus fanning:
Play with your fancies, and in them behold
Upon the hempen tackle ship-boys climbing;
Hear the shrill whistle which doth order give
To sounds confus'd: behold the threaten sails,
Borne with th' invisible and creeping wind,

Draw the huge bottoms through the furrowed sea,
Breasting the lofty surge. O, do but think
You stand upon the rivage, and behold
A city on th' inconstant billows dancing,
For so appears this fleet majestic,
Holding due course to Harfleur. Follow, follow!

Lord Chatham said that such history as he knew had been gleaned from the plays of Shakespeare and his saying has often been repeated. Yet, at best it was but historical episodes that concerned the dramatist; his work was primarily to entertain and amuse—not to instruct. He did more to inculcate a steadfast patriotism in a young nation than to tutor it.

While it is easy to point out the weaknesses of these chronicle plays, all excepting *Henry VIII* belonging to Shakespeare's early period, they at the same time show rich promise which was later fulfilled. It is regarded as extremely fortunate that, in those years, wherein his genius was taking form, these historical plays placed wholesome limitations upon him. He could not depart widely from events without offending those acquainted with the past. It was obligatory to cling fast to the data of the chronicler. In this way a fine restraint was engendered and fancy not allowed to roam rampant.

Shakespeare's creative art was established for all time by his portrayal of Falstaff and his unmoral crew. Sometimes the two parts of *Henry IV*, *Henry V* and *Merry Wives of Windsor* are spoken of as the "Falstaff plays." Probably no character called into being by the poet's imagination ever won such admiration from the groundlings, who forgot to eat, drink or quarrel in their unqualified enjoyment of his rôle; for he could outdrink them all, was a greater rascal than the most unprincipled knave among them and, withal, was so likable that even the learned Elizabeth, "with her sharp smile," insisted upon having him portrayed in love.

¹ Moulton: *Shakespeare as a Dramatic Artist*, p. 110.

² Matthews: *Shakespeare as a Playwright*, p. 88.

ROMAN TRAGEDIES

PLUTARCH'S Lives of Greek and Roman statesmen was translated into English in 1579. In his English version North endeavored to preserve the dramatic quality so characteristic of the original work. It was here that Shakespeare found the material for his Roman trilogy: *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*.

Of the three, *Julius Cæsar*, first to be written and performed, proved most popular, both in Elizabethan and modern times. Arguments have sometimes been advanced that instead of bearing the title it does, it should have been called *Brutus*—Cæsar being murdered in the third act of the play. However, the spirit of the indefatigable general pervades the drama throughout, causing Brutus to exclaim:

O, Julius Cæsar, thou art mighty yet!
Thy spirit walks abroad and turns our swords
On our own proper entrails.

It is evident that Shakespeare expended much care upon the delineation of Brutus. He was brooding over Hamlet while this play was under consideration, and something of the Dane's inability to act manifests itself in Brutus.

Shakespeare concerned himself little with those details that might engross the modern playwright who aspired to create a Roman play. His Romans consult clocks and are sometimes attired after the manner of Britishers. His mobs are not to be distinguished from English mobs; other discrepancies may be easily detected. None the less, he saw the dramatic possibilities of that critical situation in Rome when republic and empire met, Cæsar dividing the first, already gone, from one-man government, already arrived. Had he been more intimately acquainted with Roman history, he might have constructed a mighty play with the indomitable will of Julius Cæsar as its impelling theme.

The character of Brutus as described by Plutarch appealed to his imagination. Brutus was a dreamer, utterly

unsuited to the rôle he felt called upon to play. Actuated by the highest motives, he pondered over the predicament of his country until he was unable to see matters as they were. Certainly he failed to appreciate how unfitted the mob was for self-government, how incapable of comprehending the motives that prompted his conspiracy. Thus he was carried on to inevitable doom.

Women have no important part in the play and love is touched upon only as the devotion of Portia to Brutus is portrayed. The interest is sustained by rapidly moving events: the curious manifestations of the physical world that, in an age unacquainted with science, portended imminent catastrophe; the assassination of Cæsar; the inflaming of the people; the orations pronounced by Brutus and Antony, so peculiarly characteristic of the men who uttered them. Brutus, having nothing in common with the people, leaves them unmoved. Antony, quick, impassioned, wins them over in an address unburdened with superfluous words. The ultimate struggle between law and order and revolution is soon foreseen, and it is apparent that Brutus must go down under forces too mighty for him. Despite his long considered plot, he had neglected to take steps for its consummation: indeed, we realize that he is temperamentally incapable of taking practical precaution, which alone could give some promise of success to his rash undertaking.

No Shakespearean play is more familiar to modern audiences than *Julius Cæsar*. Not only is it frequently presented by professionals, but sooner or later, half the schools and colleges in the land have chosen it for amateur rendering.

In this respect it differs from the other Roman plays, which are shown but rarely, *Antony and Cleopatra* being enacted more often than *Coriolanus*. The first admits of wonderful spectacular effects although too confused to be gratifying on the stage. Antony is seen to less advantage in this play. Pulled in opposite directions by irreconcilable forces, he is borne down in the struggle. On one hand, duty, so faithfully discharged by early Romans, demands that he forsake the beautiful Egyptian Queen and devote himself to the interests of his country. But he feels the drugging

effects of his residence in the East inciting him to seek self-pleasure. Naturally quick to grasp a situation and prompt to act, he becomes vacillating, inconstant.

Shakespeare's Cleopatra is something of a courtesan, who yields to pettiness and is the creature of the passing moment—not always the marvellous and imperious queen who made the great subduer of turbulent Gaul her willing slave. She is shown as lacking heart and conscience and, having tricked Antony into suicide, takes her own life only to escape gracing the triumph of Octavius. Yet her charms hold Antony captive. When he reproaches her with having withdrawn her fleet in battle, she says: "I little thought you would have followed." Antony replies:

Egypt, thou knew'st too well
My heart was to thy rudder tied by th' strings
And thou should'st tow me after: o'er my spirit
Thy full supremacy thou knew'st, and that
Thy beek might from the bidding of the gods
Command me.

Elsewhere Enobarus says:

Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety: other women cloy
The appetites they feed, but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies.

"It is in truth a splendid historical pageant, full of moving armies, of battles on land and sea, of varied action rapidly shifting from Italy to Greece and to Egypt—and in the midst of it all, 'staged to the view,' two of the most amazing personages the world has ever seen."¹

Coriolanus brings before us a man of excellent parts who is brought to his ruin by overweening pride. The Roman plays just mentioned belong to the end of the republic; this one is set back in its early days, when the people were struggling to win some rights in a government administered by and in the interest of patricians, who made concessions with the greatest reluctance, sure that it was unsafe to entrust the state to the lowly plebs. Caius Marcius holds tenaciously to this opinion and ridicules the

common people to their faces, scorning the tribunes they have won.

Danger arises, for the Volseians, their enemies, are reported to be moving against Rome. Accordingly Marcius, unhesitating, leaves to fight against them. For his bravery before the tiny town of Corioli, he receives the name Coriolanus. His mother's heart fills with pride at his proven courage. Talking with his wife, the mother, a typical Roman matron of the early days of Roman virtue and integrity, tells how she sent him forth as a youth to seek danger and fame in war.

To a cruel war I sent him; from whence he returned,
his brows bound with oak. I tell thee, daughter, I sprang
not more in joy at first hearing he was a man-child than
now in first seeing he had proved himself a man.

Virgilia. But had he died in the business, Madam? how then?
Volumnia. Then, his good report should have been my son.

On his return home Coriolanus, as he is thenceforward called, is offered the consulship by a grateful people; however, it is necessary that he should win the approval of the commonalty. It now proves as impossible for him to show patience towards the plebs as it had been before. He holds them in contempt and antagonizes them so that they demand his exile. Angered at being driven forth from Rome, which he has helped to deliver from her foes, he seeks revenge in the camp of the enemy. Going to the Volseians, he offers to lead them successfully against Rome. Only when his mother, wife and child seek him out in the enemy's camp and plead with him is he overcome by their entreaties.

O my mother!

You have won a happy victory to Rome;

But for your son—believe it, O believe it—

Most dangerously you have with him prevailed,

If not most mortal to him!

He is put to death by those he thus abandons, but his mother is hailed by the Senate as the deliverer of Rome.

The play on the whole is not a pleasing one; the spectacle of one who would avenge himself upon his country for

sheer spite is not inspiring. As has been said, "he has provocation but not justification" for what he does. For the light thrown upon ancient Roman ideals it has its interest for the reader, but as a dramatic production it is among the least attractive Shakespearean plays.

¹ Adams: *A Life of William Shakespeare*, p. 398.

THE LIGHTER COMEDIES

AT no time have people loved fun and entertainment on the stage more than in Elizabethan England, and jokes might be broad and comparisons coarse; even the great Queen was not a stickler for delicacy. Despite the fact that immorality was treated as a suitable topic for conversation and regardless of coarse language employed even by women, the people were withal wholesome and their very frankness was a guarantee of right-mindedness. Vice was not disguised as something other than itself, covered over and made fair to behold. It was frankly acknowledged to be vice. While our own age evinces far greater refinement and delicacy of speech, it may well be questioned whether society is more moral or any sounder at the core than was that of sixteenth century England.

While blood-and-thunder tragedy was attractive to the London playgoers, it must alternate with comedy to please those who would rather laugh with the clown than sigh with the injured. So Shakespeare found it incumbent upon him to provide his company with comedies as well as chronicle plays and tragedies. Even at the outset of his career a trail had been blazed through the mysteries of tragedy; Marlowe had hewn to the line and had left a clear pathway for those who might follow; but in comedy there were only interludes and court-plays to serve for models. Consequently in his earliest comedies Shakespeare shows close adherence to such methods as Lyly had employed in plays he had written for Her Majesty's Children.

Love's Labours Lost is probably the first comedy to come from his hand, and in all probability it was based upon an earlier play, since lost. It is chiefly interesting to Shakespearean students because it bears so many marks of immaturity and experiment. With all of these it nevertheless proved Shakespeare to be a born poet. There is reason to think that it was presented for the Christmas revels of the Queen, in 1592, when the ravages of the plague were

making public performances unsafe. The story is that the king of Navarre has induced three of his companions to join him in a vow adjuring the society of women for three years, giving themselves up to study, with the object of making his little kingdom "the wonder of the world."

Our Court shall be a little Academe,
Still and contemplative in living art.

One of his associates demurs at some of the restrictions laid upon them but expresses his opinion that he will doubtless be the last to throw them off. Just as the plan is ready for execution, it is remembered that a princess from Aquitaine is even then en route to visit the king regarding a treaty which her father is too ill to negotiate. Rather than break his vow that no woman shall come near the court, the king orders tents raised and a pavilion made ready for her reception, state reasons forcing him to suspend his scheme for study. Of course the princess and her three attending ladies put to rout all inclinations for an ascetic life which the king has instilled in his young friends, and each falls in love with one of the maidens, while the king is captivated by the charms of the princess. Tennyson borrowed the plot for his *Princess*, reversing the situation.

The comedy consists of witty dialogue, while plot and characterization are alike poor. To complete the play, when other material was exhausted, two half-wits come to present an interlude before the party merely to give them something to ridicule. It has been surmised that there were two low-comedians in Shakespeare's company and that this scene was developed for their advantage. In short, while this comedy is no worse than others that had appeared before and while it seems to have proved successful as a court-play, it was in few respects in advance of earlier productions. The humour is often forced, the play upon words reminiscent of Lyly; yet the dialogue is animated and sparkling and the little song of spring and winter is a gem.

When daisies pied, and violets blue
And lady-smocks all silver white,
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue,
Do paint the meadows with delight,

one of the favorite tricks of comedy writers and Shakespeare employed it again and again. It has been aptly remarked that at a time when boys impersonated women, it is small wonder that it was employed as often as possible. The play has never been as popular as the two preceding and indicates no particular advance over them.

A little investigation will reveal the comparatively few plots which were used by the early English playwrights. Confusion resulting from women garbed as men has an important part in *Twelfth Night*, *Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Cymbeline* and *Two Gentlemen of Verona*. Shipwrecks contribute to the development in *Comedy of Errors*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Tempest* and *Pericles*. The jealousy of husbands and lovers was another favorite conceit, employed in *Othello* in a masterly manner. Shakespeare never troubled himself to invent a plot so long as a good one lay ready to his hand. Indeed, his finest plays were often those remade from earlier ones which came to his attention. Yet in each instance he evolved something wholly new, something entirely unlike the material he had appropriated and superior to it.

The Taming of the Shrew, an old play revamped from *The Taming of a Shrew*, and faintly suggestive of the scene where Noah's wife refused to enter the ark, of miracle-play memory; *Much Ado About Nothing*; *Twelfth Night*, known as *What You Will* until it was played with success before Queen Elizabeth on Twelfth Night, which name thereafter clung to it; *Merry Wives of Windsor*, written at the Queen's request, so that Falstaff might be shown in love; *Merchant of Venice*; *As You Like It* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, all belong to the period of Shakespeare's gay comedies.

It was in these last three plays that the genius of the writer shone forth beyond further doubt. *As You Like It* was suggested by a novelette, published by Thomas Lodge in 1590 and entitled *Rosalynde*. He had found the tale in matter amassed by Chaucer for the Yeoman's Tale, in the Canterbury series, although it was never incorporated into his poem. As a boy Shakespeare had wandered through the English Arden and as quickly as he had transported his

characters into a forest of that name, he had no further need of Lodge's story.* In a world half-real, half fancy, he allows them to return to nature, play awhile and philosophize about life, while the love affair of Rosalind gives piquancy to the play. Adam is believed to have been personated by the author himself. The rôle of Jaques was doubtless created for some actor of the company who required just such a part, with little action and much enunciating of speeches. Rosalind belongs to a group of charming women who inhabit the Shakespearean world. More exuberant and overflowing with spirit than Portia, she is nevertheless near of kin.

Probably no Shakespearean comedy has had wider popularity than has this. The ancient Greeks made knowledge of Euripides a test of enlightened citizenship and, after the catastrophe at Syracuse, certain Greeks owed their lives to their ability to recite portions of it. Were knowledge of Shakespeare to be taken as a criterion of present enlightenment, it is safe to say that more persons would be found able to quote from this than any other of his comedies—and from *Hamlet* than from the other tragedies. "Sweet are the uses of adversity—tongues in trees, books in the running brooks—"; "All the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players;" "She is a poor thing but mine own"—who does not know them? Or the songs:

Under the greenwood tree,
Who loves to lie with me,
And turn his merry note
Unto the sweet bird's throat—

And this:

It was a lover and his lass,
With a hey and a ho and a hey nonino,
That o'er the green corn-field did pass,
In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding;
Sweet lovers love the Spring.

It is fairly well established that for the *Merchant of Venice* Shakespeare found the tale of the pound of flesh, another of the casket choosing, and that he added the exchange of rings to complete the comedy. That he was

influenced by Marlowe's *Jew of Malta* is plain; this play was originally called the *Jew of Venice*. To understand the hatred of the Jew it is necessary to recall the mediæval attitude toward the payment of interest for borrowed money. For centuries the Jews were excluded from England. There is little doubt but that the writer intended the love story of Portia to hold the same dominating place that Rosalind's had in *As You Like It*. It has been due to a misinterpretation of the trial scene that this has been allowed to usurp the main attention of the play.

Italy was a golden land to sixteenth century England. Those who were able to travel went there, much as they still turn to sunny lands in winter time. But beyond all climatic advantages, the Renaissance had Italian birth and consequently the country gained a hold upon the minds of men beyond any other of Europe. To give a play a setting in Italy was at once to call up agreeable associations, even among those who had never been there nor expected to go. The first travelling troupes came from Italy, and they presented those inimitable farces which never failed to hold the attention.

Of all his early comedies there is none other which brings such a vision of fairies and moonlight as *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is thought to have been composed to celebrate a wedding. The fairies were not so remote from people three hundred years ago as they are today; our prosaic world has become too dull for them. They were associated with good luck—with gifts for the new-born babe and happiness for the bride; or if offended, they might visit injury upon the child or the newly founded household. All these notions were hang-overs from life in the forests, long centuries before, when good spirits and evil spirits appeared to exercise such a control over man. Shakespeare's audiences did not believe in fairies any more implicitly than we do, but they were nearer to an age that had believed in them and they accepted them in the scheme of things, much as we today accept angels. Such shapeless celestial creatures as Fra Angelico painted, robed in white with halos around their heads, singing or playing on musical instruments, probably do not seem to us a part of life

as we know it or even as we expect it to be; none the less we accept them and hang copies of them on our walls. Elizabethan England enjoyed fairies in some such way as this.

It was a happy conceit to have the confusion of identity turn on the magical juice squeezed in the eyes of sleepers by a fairy. The fun occasioned by the queen of fairydom waking to be infatuated with an ass; the amusement caused by the misunderstandings of the lovers through their inability to see who was who; the ludicrous laborers who would present a play! Never again did Shakespeare produce anything half so funny. Never did he give his imagination happier range or carry his audience farther away from this dull, material world wherein we seem determined to dwell.

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where ox-lips and the nodding violet grows;
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine.

Shakespeare had forgotten the busy hum of London when he penned those lines; he was deaf to the cries of "What d'ye lack? buy! buy!" from those who hawked their wares. Once more he was a boy, wending his way along the peaceful Avon, finding along its windings banks of thyme, fields of violets and trees vine-covered. He knew where the fairies dwelt; long years before he had almost seen them and often felt them near. Who today can read the singing words and remain conscious of sky-scrappers and street noises, or even of weariness?

For some reason—was it because he had probed deeper into life's profound? Was it because the boy of his hopes slipped away from earth? For some reason, Shakespeare never again wrote plays given up wholly to fun; a graver vein ran through the rest.

So we may rejoice that on the border land between immaturity and middle life the dramatist paused to dream, just as Chaucer had done before him, and *Lorris* earlier yet. Were we compelled to forego any dream from the many inseparable with our literature, then surely it would not be the one of *Midsummer*.

In his delightful discussion of the play, Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch has suggested a setting for it so appropriate that we could ill afford to lose it. He says: "I once discussed with a friend how, if given our will, we would have *A Midsummer Night's Dream* presented. We agreed at length on this:

"The set scene should represent a large Elizabethan hall, panelled, having a lofty oak-timbered roof and an enormous staircase. The cavity under the staircase, occupying in breadth two-thirds of the stage, should be fronted with folding or sliding doors, which, being opened, should reveal the wood, recessed, moonlit, with its trees upon a flat arras or tapestry. On this secondary remoter stage the lovers should wander through their adventures, the fairies now conspiring in the quiet hall under the lantern, anon withdrawing into the woodland to befool the mortals straying there. Then, for the last scene and the interlude of *Pyramus and Thisbe*, the hall should be filled with lights and company. That over, the bridal couples go up the great staircase. Last of all—and after a long pause, when the house is quiet, the lantern all but extinguished, the hall looking vast and eerie, lit only by a last flicker from the hearth—the fairies, announced by Puck, should come tripping back, swarming forth from cupboards and down curtains, somersaulting down-stairs, sliding down the baluster rails; all hushed as they fall to work with their brooms—hushed, save for one little voice and a thin, small chorus scarcely more audible than the last dropping embers:

"Through this house give glimmering light,
By the dead and drowsy fire;
Every elf and fairy sprite
Hop as light as bird from brier. . . .
Hand in hand, with fairy grace,
Will we sing and bless this place.
Trip away,
Make no stay,
Meet me all by break of day."²

¹ Matthews: *Shakespeare as a Playwright*, p. 72.

² Quiller-Couch: *Shakespeare's Workmanship*, p. 76.

* The scene is in France—not England.

THE GREAT TRAGEDIES

SHAKESPEARE wrote *Romeo and Juliet* before 1600—that is, during his early career as a playwright. Within the ten years following, he produced *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*. In view of the voluminous commentary upon these tragedies, appalling in its increasing magnitude and astonishing in its contradictions and differences, we would do well to reflect that the dramatist did not create his plays for the edification of scholars but for the men and women who filled the Globe, on the south bank of the Thames. It is safe to say that not more than half of these could read or write. Buildings in the streets were not designated by numbers, with which the majority had no particular facility, but by signs which could be readily comprehended by all: at the Sign of the Bells; at the Sign of the Bear; at the King's Arms. Had the Lord Chamberlain's Men or His Majesty's Men placed upon the boards plays as hard to understand as certain critics would have us to believe—*Hamlet*, for example—it is safe to say that they would have presently performed to empty houses and faced the dilemma of parting with their playwright or going into bankruptcy.

Let us imagine a tall structure, octagonal on the outside, circular on the inside; one-fourth or fifth of the wall space appropriated by the stage, with its tiring rooms behind; the remainder lined with tiers of seats, arranged like loges or boxes; the stage projecting far out in what we now call the orchestra—then called the pit, and resembling a triangle with the front point bluntly truncated. Imagine the sides of the long stage, reaching some distance into the room, flanked by gallants seated on stools, for the better display of their rich apparel. Sweep away all modern scenery and leave the actors to appeal to the ears of their auditors rather than their eyes. Consider that while some of those who make up the audience have attended Grammar schools—such as Eton and Winchester, and fewer still have



MR. HACKETT AS FALSTAFF IN HENRY IV. 1850

received degrees from Oxford and Cambridge, the great majority have had but limited schooling: considerably less than is now afforded by the first six grades. Under circumstances such as these and to assemblies thus composed, *Hamlet* was first presented and, had it not proved acceptable to them, it is reasonably certain that it would have been little heard of in succeeding generations. Regardless of modern devotion to the greatest of English dramatists, and in spite of the frequency with which his plays are still produced, it would be idle to contend that they call forth as much enthusiasm today as they did in Elizabethan England. Such being the case, it is justifiable to think that we shall be entirely able to grasp what we read, if that is the way we are reviewing the plays, or what is said and done before us if we are witnessing their presentation.

This is not equivalent to saying that the plays are trivial; none more profound have ever been written. They are profound because life is profound, something less apparent to the youth than to one of middle life, and to him not so plain as to the person of venerable years. It is not possible for all to penetrate these tragedies with similar understanding, or even for the same individual to interpret them identically at different stages of his life. The wider our experiences, the further we probe into the heart of things, the more these plays reveal, and it is as idle to try to disclose their fulness to the immature as to unfold a flower before its time.

Romeo and Juliet, *Hamlet* and *Lear* were old tales, given new form by Shakespeare. The first was an Italian Renaissance story of two warring families, the Capulets and Montagues. Mediæval Italy could have supplied many similar hating families, sworn enemies perpetuating their feuds from one generation to another. Cite for example one illustration immortalized by Dante. A daughter of the Capulets falls in love with a son of the Montagues, and, considering the importance then given to family and ancestral pride, the material for a tragedy was already provided. Bandello had the story from Da Porto and it was first done into English in a wearisome poem by one Arthur Brooke. As in all cases, Shakespeare condensed the matter at hand,

introduced much that was foreign to the earlier tale and transformed the whole into an immortal story of impassionate love, precipitated to inevitable doom by the immoderation of the lovers as well as by force of circumstance.

"*Romeo and Juliet* illustrates better than some of his greater dramas the essentially corrective quality in Shakespeare's genius—the gift for setting an old story right, for adjusting it to the criticism of facts, rather than contriving novelties and surprises. . . . To put the whole matter in a phrase, the story before Shakespeare touched it was a tragedy which befell two young lovers; he made it the tragedy of young love. . . .

"The feelings the play inspires in us indicate the innocence into which Shakespeare transposed the story, and it is probably this innocence of feeling more than the simplification of the plot, which made the play universal."¹

Romeo is shown at first as restless and believing himself to be in love with one Rosalind. Roused to go in disguise to a ball given by the Capulets, he beholds Juliet and the two fall in love at first sight. The deep charm of the play lies in the subsequent transformation of Juliet, under the fervour of her love, from an artless girl into a woman. Meantime her father, although allowing that she may decide upon her future husband, practically pledges her to one Paris, an insistent suitor. Romeo and Juliet are secretly married. One of the frequent brawls between the two houses breaking out again, Romeo slays a cousin of Juliet's in self defense and so is banished from Verona. The day draws near wherein she must marry Paris and Juliet goes in anguish to Friar Laurence to aid her in the plight. He gives her a potion which will give one the appearance of death for a couple of days. When she shall be placed in the tomb, he will bring Romeo to her and they can make their escape. The prospect is too bright to be true. Romeo fails to receive the letter divulging the scheme but he learns of Juliet's supposed death. Coming to her tomb, whither Paris has resorted out of reverence, Romeo finds her seemingly dead and first slays Paris, then drinks poison and dies. Juliet, rousing from her swoon, sees Romeo dead and stabs herself with his dagger. Over the dead children the

bitter enemies make peace, their lives brought to an untimely end by the senseless feud.

The play retains its popularity upon the stage, both as an opera and a play. The rôle of Juliet is one of the loveliest in Shakespearian repertoire and wellnigh every great actress has sooner or later attempted its personation.

The lost Hamlet was a revenge tragedy of the Kydian type, probably written by Kyd, although that cannot be proved. The King of Denmark has suddenly died and with precipitous haste his queen has married his brother, who is made king by the electors. Friends of Prince Hamlet learn that a ghost strides in armour around the royal palace at night. Hamlet is a studious young man, little given to practical affairs. His suspicions are aroused and he challenges the ghost to tell why it disturbs the night. The apparition discloses that it is the spirit of Hamlet's father, murdered by his brother in order that the latter might usurp his throne and queen. The prince has been devoted to his father and is so unsettled by the dire utterances of the ghost that he cannot at once formulate any plan for revenging his death, as the ghost urges him to do. So staggering is the inference that his mother has been untrue to his father that womankind becomes abhorrent to him and he deserts the gentle Ophelia, to whom he has previously paid marked attention. The taking of life is so repellent to his temperament that he delays to prove the truth of what has been told him. To this end he engages a strolling company of actors to enact a play following in the main the doings of his mother and uncle. The spectacle of his crime before Claudius proves too much, and he quickly leaves the hall, perturbed. Confident now of his guilt, Hamlet nevertheless delays in taking his life. Life, death and the vast forever revolve before him and cause him to ponder the unsolvable problems of the universe. Poor Ophelia is driven mad by the taking off of her father and by Hamlet's unnatural conduct. Her pathetic rôle, alone with none to understand her and only her self-sufficient father and brother to reiterate trite sayings, until the former is stabbed by Hamlet as he eavesdrops behind a curtain, is hauntingly tragic. Determined to avenge his father's wanton murder,

Hamlet feigns madness until a suitable opportunity shall arrive. In the end the king, queen, Laertes and the prince die together, leaving the stage cumbered with the dead.

As a stage production today, the play is long. Little action is shown; Hamlet occupies the stage much of the time and engages in many long declamations, his soliloquy on suicide being most famous of them all. Grim humour is supplied in one scene by two grave diggers, who philosophize on life and death with a dry cynicism that brings gruesome wit to heavy tragedy. Notwithstanding, the play is a favorite. It is regarded as the most searching of all Shakespeare's productions.

The tragedy of *King Lear* appeared before Shakespeare's time. The old play was a rather tedious affair, a portrayal of parental love, filial affection or its unnatural absence. The tragedy as it emerged from reconstruction by the great dramatist was something wholly unlike its former self. Shakespeare shows us an aged king, wearied by the cares of state. He resolves to apportion his kingdom among his three daughters, awarding them according to their affection for him. Goneril and Regan, cold, proud and haughty, strive to outdo one another in their protestations of regard. Cordelia, the one sweet, wholesome child, is so repelled by her sisters' false vows that she bluntly attests that she loves her father according to her duty, and would know in what regard these women hold their husbands if they can declare their whole affection to be centered in their father. However, Lear's self-pride is pricked and he disowns the only daughter who is true to him. His dominions are divided between the other two and Cordelia is disowned. The king of France, her suitor, takes her without dowry, and they quit the scene. Presently the true situation is borne home to the king, when he finds himself an unwelcome guest in the castles of his daughters. One after the other turns him out and, his reason unhinged by such treatment, in a dreadful storm he and his faithful fool brave the elements together. Cordelia learns of his predicament and comes to his relief, but sanity has broken down under the strain. In a rage Edmund orders her death and distracted

Lear dies with her lifeless body in his arms, mistaking her for his fool.

Lear is occasionally placed upon the stage today; the play is somewhat long and perhaps a little tedious in presentation. The unnatural daughters and their wilful neglect of their old father, the blinding of Gloster, and the death of Cordelia tend to make it unsuited in some respects for present enjoyment. Nevertheless, the play is colorful and the storm on the heath unforgettable, as Lear, "every inch a king," raves against ingratitude.

Macbeth had its origin in Holinshed's Chronicles, a very present help for Shakespeare when in search of dramatic possibilities. It was written after James I had ascended the English throne and in certain respects was done in compliment to him. It is one of the shortest of all his plays, being only about one-half the length of Hamlet. Macbeth is returning from battle, where he has distinguished himself. The king Duncan recognizes his courage and is quick to reward him. As Macbeth and Banquo come along over the dreary heath, three weird sisters accost them and hail Macbeth as Thane of Glamis, Thane of Cawdor and future king. Banquo is not slighted; he, it is said, will give a line of kings to Scotland. Banquo is unmoved by their prognostications but within Macbeth's heart a latent spark of treasonable ambition is kindled. Since he stands within the range of possibility for sovereignty, we suspect that the witches add fuel to a smoldering fire, well covered; for later so little is said between him and Lady Macbeth that one must believe there to have been earlier discussion of what they would do were circumstance to place them on the throne. Lady Macbeth, aflame to wear a crown, is roused by the news that the king will rest in her castle for the night. Thus he is put within the power of Macbeth and his wife, the latter more determined upon the accomplishment of their evil purpose than her husband. The gentle Duncan is stabbed as he sleeps; Lady Macbeth seizes the dagger and, smearing the guards with blood, leaves it in their possession. The sound of knocking is heard at the gates and the sleepy porter grudgingly admits Macduff, who has been instructed by his king to waken him at dawn. He is led by the apparently

unsuspecting host to the scene of carnage. Macbeth in his anger kills the guards—before they have been allowed to utter a word.

From this time forward calamity heaps upon calamity. Fearing Banquo, who has been foretold to be the founder of a line of kings, Macbeth has him and his son slain. At a feast given by him as king, the ghost of Banquo appears before him at the banquet—invisible to the rest: unmistakable to Macbeth. Lady Macbeth is haunted by her crime and in her sleep walks about, trying in vain to wash the blood from her fingers. In the end Macbeth is killed and the kingdom restored to Duncan's son.

The portrayal of witches and incantation was less of a problem in Shakespeare's time than now. It was during his life that Parliament passed a law condemning to death any who should "use any invocation or conjuration of any evil or wicked spirit or consult, feed or reward any such spirit, or take any dead man, woman or child out of the grave to be used in any manner of witchcraft, charm, or enchantment, or who should practise witchcraft, sorcery, charm or enchantment." This law was only repealed in the nineteenth century.

Othello depicts the passion of jealousy as it gains control of a noble person, naturally disposed to be just and fair. None can doubt the Moor's affection for his beautiful, finely-bred wife. Yet Iago, as unprincipled as Richard III and as conscienceless, is able to incite him to his dire deed, implanting distrust and feeding the fire until it bursts into flame. Viewed from the standpoint of construction, it is finest of all these great tragedies.

Like *Romeo and Juliet*, *Othello* has become the subject of opera as well as play and continues to hold an equal popularity.

¹ Erskine: *Romeo and Juliet*, p. 216.

THE LAST COMEDIES

JAMES I ascended the English throne in 1603 and gradually new social standards replaced those of Tudor England. The Court desired less to be edified than to be diverted; mental food was less in demand than entertainment. Under the Stuarts the moral tone of the country became lax. A superficial Court set standards which were aped by a new nobility, the finer and more ancient families withdrawing to the seclusion of country homes. This had been true to some extent at the accession of Elizabeth, but under the early Stuarts the more cultured and refined came to count for little in the social gaiety of the age. King James countenanced conduct that Elizabeth would never have tolerated and lavished wealth upon favorites to a degree that would have horrified his thrifty predecessor and was a scandal even to his own age.

Literature, always a mirror of the times which give it birth, soon reflected the popular conceptions and those who wrote with the hope of winning royal patronage were not slow to grasp the new situation. Whereas the Court of Elizabeth, taking its cue from the erudite Queen, favored plays which were mentally stimulating, the Court of the early Stuarts delighted in spectacular effects, the masque becoming most popular of all dramatic forms. Members of the Court found pleasure in participating in splendid tableaux and little plays wherein few if any lines were to be repeated but the attention of the audience could be held by bizarre effects, gorgeous costumes, and dazzling beauty.

The last plays of Shakespeare reflect something of these changes which had crept in almost unperceived until a complete transformation had been effected.

He yielded to the tendencies of the times only in a measure, disdaining the triviality to which some of his late contemporaries resorted. Nevertheless, the student of his late comedies finds in them reflections of their age.

Pericles, "a pageant of adventure," is conceded to be

but partially his work. With the Prince of Tyre for its main character, it whisks about from land to land, from year to year, setting at defiance all unities.

The two comedies, *All's Well that Ends Well* and *Measure for Measure*, although written after the great dramatist had found himself and evolved his own style, are perhaps the least pleasing of all his plays. Both were old tales revamped. *All's Well* was a Boccaccio story, better suited to his age and country than to the dawning seventeenth century in England. The play is almost never placed upon the boards today, being offensive to present standards. *Measure for Measure* is seldom acted and is not a favorite among Shakespearean readers.

Cymbeline and *A Winter's Tale* are perhaps read less than they deserve to be. Improbable they have been declared to be by many a critic; but this is a comment that might be raised against many an imaginative literary production.

In *Cymbeline* an intrigue tale of Boccaccio is given a historical setting gleaned from Holinshed. Some critics hold that Shakespeare wrote only part of it in collaboration with some other dramatist. Imogen is beyond doubt his own creation. She belongs to the rare gallery of Shakespearean women. The uneven style of the play is often offered as convincing proof of the theory of two authors. The description of rural joys and the inadvertent criticisms of life in city and Court are instanced by those who persist in paralleling his works with changes in his personal life, as reflecting those years wherein the poet turned gratefully toward Stratford whenever opportunity afforded, glad to escape from the turmoil of the capital. In the absence of data on the subject, it is natural to attempt to discover the writer's personal views in his plays, although conclusions thus reached must always be conceded to be open to doubt.

Swinburne has called Imogen the sweetest of all Shakespearean characters. Her father, Cymbeline, is king of Britain, and is married to a scheming woman, his second wife, who pretends to befriend Imogen but in reality hates her and works for her undoing. When the story opens Imogen has just married a worthy man of her choice instead

of her stepmother's son, the consort planned for her by her royal parents. Posthumus, her husband, is banished by the irate king and Imogen held prisoner.

In exile he is brought proof by a false friend that Imogen has been faithless to him and in his anger, he commissions his servant, whom he left behind to watch over her, to murder Imogen. This Pisanio is unable to do. He aids her to escape as a page, while in due time most of the leading characters meet after a battle and the truth becomes known: that Imogen lives, that Posthumus was deceived by his friend, that Imogen had been faithful. Even Cymbeline is informed after his queen's death of her dying confession, which revealed her perfidy and Imogen's steadfast character.

The sweet dignity of Imogen under the most trying conditions, her failure to reproach those who occasioned her suffering, endear her to all. Those few words of Posthumus when at last he realizes his own gross injustice and her purity and embraces the wife, still apparelled as a page,—

Hang there like fruit, my Soul,
Till the tree die!

are more impressive than a deal of expostulation.

In such sentences as this the advantage of country life over that of the city is suggested:

O this life
Is nobler than attending for a check,
Richer than doing nothing for a bauble,
Prouder than rustling in unpaid-for silk.

Court favor, difficult to attain, harder to keep, expressed thus:

The art o' the court
As hard to leave as keep; whose top to climb
Is certain falling, or so slippery that
The fear 's as bad as falling:

Best known of all the lines in the play is the lovely song

Hark, hark! the lark at heaven's gate sings.

A Winter's Tale has likewise for its subject the insane jealousy of a husband—in this case, born of his own imaginings. Nor is it strange that attention is often called to the fact that the last plays written by Shakespeare should have had for their theme the ungrounded belief of husbands in the infidelity of their wives. Concessions are made in the play to the prevailing fondness for extraordinary happenings, unexpected revelations, and astonishing disclosures. Hermione, believed to have been dead for sixteen years, appears at the end of the play to complete the story—the lapse of time permitting Perdita to grow from babyhood to womanhood. Such disregard for the unity of time is a dramatic blemish and has caused it to be said of the play that it was “back-broken.” The joy in flowers and birds and other natural sights, more characteristic of country than city, is again suggestive of the poet's late return to the rural scenes of his boyhood. Perdita gathers the

Daffodils,

That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty; violets dim,
But sweeter than the lids of Juno's eyes
Or Cytherea's breath; pale primroses,
That die unmarried, ere they can behold
Bright Phœbus in his strength, a malady
Most incident to maids; bold oxlips and
The crown imperial; lilies of all kinds,
The flower-de-luce being one!

Throughout his whole career as a playwright, whenever Shakespeare reverted in thought to flowery meads or brooding streams, he was back again amidst scenes which during plastic years had left their indelible imprint. Poetry flowed from his pen and he sometimes seems to have had to check himself with almost a sense of abruptness lest the tale be unduly interrupted. Always a poet, it was something of an effort for him invariably to hold poetry subservient to dramatic needs.

The Tempest was the last play written entirely by Shakespeare and was first performed in 1611. There is strong reason to believe that the author made some radical

changes in it afterwards in order to have it do service as a play to be performed during the festivals attendant upon the wedding of Princess Elizabeth, daughter of James I, to the Elector Palatine, in 1613. The masque introduced in the fourth act is thought to have replaced other matter of an entirely different nature.

Sidney Lee, in his life of Shakespeare, recounts at length the circumstance which suggested the play to the dramatist.

“In the summer of 1609 a fleet bound for Virginia, under the command of Sir George Somers, was overtaken by a storm of the West Indies, and the admiral’s ship, the ‘Sea-Venture,’ was driven on the coast of the hitherto unknown Bermuda Isles. There they remained ten months, pleasantly impressed by the mild beauty of the climate but sorely tried by the hogs which overran the island, and by mysterious noises which led them to imagine that spirits and devils had made the island their home. Somes and his men were given up for lost but they escaped from Bermuda in two boats of cedar to Virginia in May 1610, and the news of their adventures and of their safety was carried to England by some of the seamen in September 1610. The sailors’ arrival created vast public excitement in London. At least five accounts were soon published of the shipwreck and of the mysterious island, previously uninhabited by man, which had proved the salvation of the expedition. ‘A Discovery of the Bermudas, otherwise called the Ile of Divels,’ written by Sylvester Jourdan, one of the survivors, appeared as early as October. A second pamphlet describing the disaster was issued by the Council of the Virginia Company in December, and a third by one of the leaders of the expedition, Sir Thomas Gates. Shakespeare who mentions the ‘still vexed Bermoothes,’ incorporated in ‘The Tempest’ many hints from Jourdan, Gates and the other pamphleteers. The references to the gentle climate of the island on which Prospero is cast away, and to the spirits and devils that infested it, seem to render its identification with the newly discovered Bermudas unquestionable.”¹

He who had cast to the four winds all thought of the unity of time in *A Winter’s Tale*, permitting the lapse of sixteen years between two acts, now displayed strictest

adherence to it, comprising the action within the limits of one day. The appropriateness of the play for a wedding entertainment is shown in the love-story of Miranda and Ferdinand that threads through it. Many feel that when Prospero says farewell to his magic, Shakespeare takes a delicate farewell to his profession which he had followed so many years. When the magician uttered the words: "But this rough magic I do now adjure," breaking his staff to bury it fathoms deep, it is thought that those who shared his confidence knew that the poet was taking leave of his wonted activities; and when Ariel, suggestive of ariel and air, near of kin to Puck, was given the release for which he fretted, he who had given him birth set free his creative imagination, held long in bondage to accomplish his purpose.

Nor can all who, like Ben Jonson, worship Shakespeare "on this side idolatry" miss the significance of those pregnant words in the fourth act with which Prospero dispelled the magic pageant:

These our actors,
As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
Are melted into air, into thin air:
And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
And like this insubstantial pageant faded,
Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
As dreams are made on; and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

It is truths such as these, uttered so fittingly, that has led to the linking of Shakespeare with the Bible; both fundamental and priceless, profound in meaning, universal in expression and, in dearth of other reading matter, almost sufficient for man, as certain illustrious characters have demonstrated.

¹ Sidney Lee: *A Life of Shakespeare*, p. 252.

AS YOU LIKE IT

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

DUKE, *living in banishment.*

FREDERICK, *his brother, and usurper of his dominions.*

AMIENS, }
JAQUES, } *lords attending on the banished Duke.*

LE BEAU, *a courtier attending upon Frederick.*

CHARLES, *wrestler to Frederick.*

OLIVER, }
JAQUES, } *sons of Sir Rowland de Boys.*
ORLANDO, }

ADAM, }
DENNIS, } *servants to Oliver.*

TOUCHSTONE, *a clown.*

SIR OLIVER MARTEXT, *a vicar.*

CORIN, }
SYLVIVS, } *shepherds.*

WILLIAM, *a country fellow, in love with Audrey.*

A person representing Hymen.

ROSALIND, *daughter to the banished Duke.*

CELIA, *daughter of Frederick.*

PHEBE, *a shepherdess.*

AUDREY, *a country wench.*

Lords, pages, and attendants, &c.

SCENE: *Oliver's house; Duke Frederick's Court; and the Forest of Arden.*

ACT FIRST

SCENE I.

Orchard of Oliver's House.

Enter ORLANDO and ADAM.

Orl. As I remember, Adam, it was upon this fashion: bequeathed me by will but poor a thousand crowns, and, as thou sayest, charged my brother, on his blessing, to breed me well: and there begins my sadness. My brother Jaques he keeps at school, and report speaks goldenly of his profit: for my part, he keeps me rustically at home, or to speak more properly, stays me here at home unkept; for call

you that keeping for a gentleman of my birth, that differs not from the stalling of an ox? His horses are bred better; for, besides that they are fair with their feeding, they are taught their manage, and to that end riders dearly hired; but I, his brother, gain nothing under him but growth; for which his animals on his dunghills are as much bound to him as I. Besides this nothing that he so plentifully gives me, the something that nature gave me of his countenance seems to take from me: he lets me feed with his hinds, bars me the place of a brother, and, as much as in him lies, mines my gentility with my education. This is it, Adam, that grieves me; and the spirit of my father, which I think is within me, begins to mutiny against this servitude: I will no longer endure it, though yet I know no wise remedy how to avoid it.

Adam. Yonder comes my master, your brother.

Orl. Go apart, Adam, and thou shalt hear how he will shake me up.

Enter OLIVER.

Oli. Now, sir! what make you here?

Orl. Nothing: I am not taught to make anything.

Oli. What mar you then, sir?

Orl. Marry, sir, I am helping you to mar that which God made, a poor unworthy brother of yours, with idleness.

Oli. Marry, sir, be better employed, and be naught awhile.

Orl. Shall I keep your hogs and eat husks with them? What prodigal portion have I spent, that I should come to such penury?

Oli. Know you where you are, sir?

Orl. O, sir, very well; here in your orchard.

Oli. Know you before whom, sir?

Orl. Aye, better than him I am before knows me. I know you are my eldest brother; and, in the gentle condition of blood, you should so know me. The courtesy of nations allows you my better, in that you are the first-born; but the same tradition takes not away my blood, were there twenty brothers betwixt us: I have as much of my father in me as you; albeit, I confess, your coming before me is nearer to his reverence.

Oli. What, boy!

Orl. Come, Come, elder brother, you are too young in this.

Oli. Wilt thou lay hands on me, villain?

Orl. I am no villain; I am the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys; he was my father, and he is thrice a villain that says such a father begot villains. Wert thou not my brother, I would not take this hand from thy throat till this other had pulled out thy tongue for saying so: thou has railed on thyself.

Adam. Sweet masters, be patient: for your father's remembrance, be at accord.

Oli. Let me go, I say.

Orl. I will not, till I please: you shall hear me. My father charged you in his will to give me good education: you have trained me like a peasant, obscuring and hiding from me all gentleman-like qualities. The spirit of my father grows strong in me, and I will no longer endure it: therefore allow me such exercises as may become a gentleman, or give me the poor allottery my father left me by testament; with that I will go buy my fortunes.

Oli. And what wilt thou do? beg, when that is spent? Well, sir, get you in: I will not long be troubled with you; you shall have some part of your will: I pray you, leave me.

Orl. I will no further offend you than becomes me for my good.

Oli. Get you with him, you old dog.

Adam. Is 'old dog' my reward? Most true, I have lost my teeth in your service. God be with my old master! he would not have spoken such a word.

[*Exeunt ORLANDO and ADAM.*]

Oli. Is it even so? begin you to grow upon me? I will physie your rankness, and yet give no thousand crowns neither. Holla, Dennis!

Enter DENNIS.

Den. Calls your worship?

Oli. Was not Charles, the Duke's wrestler, here to speak with me?

Den. So please you, he is here at the door and importunes access to you.

Oli. Call him in. [*Exit DENNIS.*] 'Twill be a good way; and to-morrow the wrestling is.

Enter CHARLES.

Cha. Good morrow to your worship.

Oli. Good Monsieur Charles, what's the new news at the new court?

Cha. There's no news at the court, sir, but the old news: that is, the old Duke is banished by his younger brother the new Duke; and three or four loving lords have put themselves into voluntary exile with him, whose lands and revenues enrich the new Duke; therefore he gives them good leave to wander.

Oli. Can you tell if Rosalind, the Duke's daughter, be banished with her father?

Cha. O, no; for the Duke's daughter, her cousin, so loves her, being ever from their cradles bred together, that she would have followed her exile, or have died to stay behind her. She is at the court, and no less beloved of her uncle than his own daughter; and never two ladies loved as they do.

Oli. Where will the old Duke live?

Cha. They say he is already in the forest of Arden, and a many merry men with him; and there they live like the old Robin Hood of England: they say many young gentlemen flock to him every day, and fleet the time carelessly, as they did in the golden world.

Oli. What, you wrestle to-morrow before the new Duke?

Cha. Marry, do I, sir; and I came to acquaint you with a matter. I am given, sir, secretly to understand that your younger brother, Orlando, hath a disposition to come in disguised against me to try a fall. To-morrow, sir, I wrestle for my credit; and he that escapes me without some broken limb shall acquit him well. Your brother is but young and tender; and, for your love, I would be loath to foil him, as I must, for my own honour, if he come in: therefore, out of my love to you, I came hither to acquaint you withal; that either you might stay him from his intendment, or brook such disgrace well as he shall run into; in that it is a thing of his own search, and altogether against my will.

Oli. Charles, I thank thee for thy love to me, which thou shalt find I will most kindly requite. I had myself notice of my brother's purpose herein, and have by underhand means laboured to dissuade him from it, but he is resolute. I'll tell thee, Charles:—it is the stubbornest young fellow of France; full of ambition, an envious emulator of every man's good parts, a secret and villainous contriver against me his natural brother: therefore use thy discretion; I had as lief thou didst break his neck as his



INTERIOR OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL WHERE SHAKESPEARE WAS A PUPIL
Some of the desks date from his school days



EXTERIOR OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL, STRATFORD-ON-AVON
This shows a typical sixteenth century building

finger. And thou wert best look to 't; for if thou dost him any slight disgrace, or if he do not mightily grace himself on thee, he will practise against thee by poison, entrap thee by some treacherous device, and never leave thee till he hath ta'en thy life by some indirect means or other; for, I assure thee, and almost with tears I speak it, there is not one so young and so villainous this day living. I speak but brotherly of him; but should I anatomize him to thee as he is, I must blush and weep, and thou must look pale and wonder.

Cha. I am heartily glad I came hither to you. If he come tomorrow, I'll give him his payment: if ever he go alone again, I'll never wrestle for prize more: and so, God keep your worship!

Oli. Farewell, good Charles. [*Exit* CHARLES.
Now will I stir this gamester: I hope I shall see an end of him; for my soul, yet I know not why, hates nothing more than he. Yet he's gentle; never schooled, and yet learned; full of noble device; of all sorts enchantingly beloved; and indeed so much in the heart of the world, and especially of my own people, who best know him, that I am altogether misprised: but it shall not be so long; this wrestler shall clear all: nothing remains but that I kindle the boy thither; which now I'll go about. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.

Lawn before the Duke's palace.

Enter ROSALIND and CELIA.

Cel. I pray thee, Rosalind, sweet my coz, be merry.

Ros. Dear Celia, I show more mirth than I am mistress of; and would you yet I were merrier? Unless you could teach me to forget a banished father, you must not learn me how to remember any extraordinary pleasure.

Cel. Herein I see thou lovest me not with the full weight that I love thee. If my uncle, thy banished father, had banished thy uncle, the Duke my father, so thou hadst been still with me, I could have taught my love to take thy father for mine: so wouldst thou, if the truth of thy love to me were so righteously tempered as mine is to thee.

Ros. Well, I will forget the condition of my estate, to rejoice in yours.

- Cel.* You know my father hath no child but I, nor none is like to have: and, truly, when he dies, thou shalt be his heir; for what he hath taken away from thy father perforce, I will render thee again in affection; by mine honour, I will; and when I break that oath, let me turn monster: therefore, my sweet Rose, my dear Rose, be merry.
- Ros.* From henceforth I will, coz, and devise sports. Let me see; what think you of falling in love?
- Cel.* Marry, I prithee, do, to make sport withal: but love no man in good earnest; nor no further in sport neither, than with safety of a pure blush thou mayst in honour come off again.
- Ros.* What shall be our sport, then?
- Cel.* Let us sit and mock the good housewife Fortune from her wheel, that her gifts may henceforth be bestowed equally.
- Ros.* I would we could do so; for her benefits are mightily misplaced; and the bountiful blind woman doth most mistake in her gifts to women.
- Cel.* 'Tis true; for those that she makes fair she scarce makes honest; and those that she makes honest she makes very ill-favouredly.
- Ros.* Nay, now thou goest from Fortune's office to Nature's: Fortune reigns in gifts of the world, not in the lineaments of Nature.

Enter TOUCHSTONE.

- Cel.* No? when Nature hath made a fair creature, may she not by Fortune fall into the fire? Though Nature hath given us wit to flout at Fortune, hath not Fortune sent in this fool to cut off the argument?
- Ros.* Indeed, there is Fortune too hard for Nature, when Fortune makes Nature's natural the cutter-off of Nature's wit.
- Cel.* Peradventure this is not Fortune's work neither, but Nature's; who perceiveth our natural wits too dull to reason of such goddesses, and hath sent this natural for our whetstone; for always the dullness of the fool is the whetstone of the wits. How now, wit! whither wander you?
- Touch.* Mistress, you must come away to your father.
- Cel.* Were you made the messenger?
- Touch.* No, by mine honour, but I was bid to come for you.
- Ros.* Where learned you that oath, fool?

Touch. Of a certain knight that swore by his honour they were good pancakes, and swore by his honour the mustard was naught; now I'll stand to it, the pancakes were naught and the mustard was good, and yet was not the knight forsworn.

Cel. How prove you that, in the great heap of your knowledge?

Ros. Ay, marry, now unmuzzle your wisdom.

Touch. Stand you both forth now: stroke your chins, and swear by your beards that I am a knave.

Cel. By our beards, if we had them, thou art.

Touch. By my knavery, if I had it, then I were; but if you swear by that that is not, you are not forsworn: no more was this knight, swearing by his honour, for he never had any; or if he had, he had sworn it away before ever he saw those pancakes or that mustard.

Cel. Prithee, who is't that thou meanest?

Touch. One that old Frederick, your father, loves.

Cel. My father's love is enough to honour him: enough! speak no more of him; you'll be whipped for taxation one of these days.

Touch. The more pity, that fools may not speak wisely what wise men do foolishly.

Cel. By my troth, thou sayest true; for since the little wit that fools have was silenced, the little foolery that wise men have makes a great show. Here comes Monsieur Le Beau.

Ros. With his mouth full of news.

Cel. Which he will put on us, as pigeons feed their young.

Ros. Then shall we be news-crammed.

Cel. All the better; we shall be the more marketable.

Enter LE BEAU.

Bon jour, Monsieur Le Beau; what's the news?

Le Beau. Fair princess, you have lost much good sport.

Cel. Sport! of what colour?

Le Beau. What colour, madam! how shall I answer you?

Ros. As wit and fortune will.

Touch. Or as the Destinies decree.

Cel. Well said: that was laid on with a trowel.

Touch. Nay, if I keep not my rank,—

Ros. Thou lovest thy old smell.

Le Beau. You amaze me, ladies: I would have told you of good wrestling, which you have lost the sight of.

Ros. Yet tell us the manner of the wrestling.

Le Beau. I will tell you the beginning; and, if it please your ladyships, you may see the end; for the best is yet to do; and here, where you are, they are coming to perform it.

Cel. Well, the beginning, that is dead and buried.

Le Beau. There comes an old man and his three sons,—

Cel. I could match this beginning with an old tale.

Le Beau. Three proper young men, of excellent growth and presence.

Ros. With bills on their necks, “Be it known unto all men by these presents.”

Le Beau. The eldest of the three wrestled with Charles, the Duke’s wrestler; which Charles in a moment threw him, and broke three of his ribs, that there is little hope of life in him: so he served the second, and so the third. Yonder they lie; the poor old man, their father, making such pitiful dole over them that all the beholders take his part with weeping.

Ros. Alas!

Touch. But what is the sport, monsieur, that the ladies have lost?

Le Beau. Why, this that I speak of.

Touch. Thus men may grow wiser every day: it is the first time that ever I heard breaking of ribs was sport for ladies.

Cel. Or I, I promise thee.

Ros. But is there any else longs to see this broken music in his sides? is there yet another dotes upon rib-breaking? Shall we see this wrestling, cousin?

Le Beau. You must, if you stay here; for here is the place appointed for the wrestling, and they are ready to perform it.

Cel. Yonder, sure, they are coming: let us now stay and see it.

Flourish. Enter DUKE FREDERICK, LORDS, ORLANDO, CHARLES,
and Attendants.

Duke F. Come on: since the youth will not be entreated, his own peril on his forwardness.

Ros. Is yonder the man?

Le Beau. Even he, madam.

Cel. Alas, he is too young! yet he looks successfully.

Duke F. How now, daughter and cousin! are you crept hither to see the wrestling?

Ros. Ay, my liege, so please you give us leave.

Duke F. You will take little delight in it, I can tell you, there is such odds in the man. In pity of the challenger’s youth

I would fain dissuade him, but he will not be entreated.
Speak to him, ladies; see if you can move him.

Cel. Call him hither, good Monsieur Le Beau.

Duke F. Do so: I'll not be by.

Le Beau. Monsieur the challenger, the princess calls for you.

Orl. I attend them with all respect and duty.

Ros. Young man, have you challenged Charles the wrestler?

Orl. No, fair princess; he is the general challenger: I come but in, as others do, to try with him the strength of my youth.

Cel. Young gentleman, your spirits are too bold for your years. You have seen cruel proof of this man's strength: if you saw yourself with your eyes, or knew yourself with your judgment, the fear of your adventure would counsel you to a more equal enterprise. We pray you, for your own sake, to embrace your own safety, and give over this attempt.

Ros. Do, young sir; your reputation shall not therefore be misprised: we will make it our suit to the Duke that the wrestling might not go forward.

Orl. I beseech you, punish me not with your hard thoughts; wherein I confess me much guilty, to deny so fair and excellent ladies any thing. But let your fair eyes and gentle wishes go with me to my trial: wherein if I be foiled, there is but one shamed that was never gracious; if killed, but one dead that is willing to be so: I shall do my friends no wrong, for I have none to lament me; the world no injury, for in it I have nothing: only in the world I fill up a place, which may be better supplied when I have made it empty.

Ros. The little strength that I have, I would it were with you.

Cel. And mine, to eke out hers.

Ros. Fare you well: pray heaven I be deceived in you!

Cel. Your heart's desires be with you!

Cha. Come, where is this young gallant that is so desirous to lie with his mother earth?

Orl. Ready, sir; but his will hath in it a more modest working.

Duke F. You shall try but one fall.

Cha. No, I warrant your Grace, you shall not entreat him to a second, that have so mightily persuaded him from a first.

Orl. You mean to mock me after; you should not have mocked me before: but come your ways.

Ros. Now Hercules be thy speed, young man!

Cel. I would I were invisible, to catch the strong fellow by the leg. [*They wrestle.*]

Ros. O excellent young man!

Cel. If I had a thunderbolt in mine eye, I can tell who should down. [*Shout. CHARLES is thrown.*]

Duke F. No more, no more.

Orl. Yes, I beseech your Grace: I am not yet well breathed.

Duke F. How dost thou, Charles?

Le Beau. He cannot speak, my lord.

Duke F. Bear him away. What is thy name, young man?

Orl. Orlando, my liege; the youngest son of Sir Rowland de Boys.

Duke F. I would thou hadst been son to some man else:

The world esteem'd thy father honourable,

But I did find him still mine enemy:

Thou shouldst have better pleased me with this deed,

Hadst thou descended from another house.

But fair thee well; thou art a gallant youth:

I would thou hadst told me of another father.

[*Exeunt DUKE FRED., train, and LE BEAU.*]

Cel. Were I my father, coz, would I do this?

Orl. I am more proud to be Sir Rowland's son,
His youngest son; and would not change that calling,
To be adopted heir to Frederick.

Ros. My father loved Sir Rowland as his soul,
And all the world was of my father's mind:
Had I before known this young man his son,
I should have given him tears unto entreaties,
Ere he should thus have ventured.

Cel. Gentle cousin,
Let us go thank him and encourage him:
My father's rough and envious disposition
Sticks me at heart. Sir, you have well deserved:
If you do keep your promises in love
But justly, as you have exceeded all promise,
Your mistress shall be happy.

Ros. Gentleman,

[*Giving him a chain from her neck.*]

Wear this for me, one out of suits with fortune,
That could give more, but that her hand lacks means.
Shall we go, coz?

- Cel.* Ay. Fare you well, fair gentleman.
Orl. Can I not say, I thank you? My better parts
 Are all thrown down, and that which here stands up
 Is but a quintain, a mere lifeless block.
Ros. He calls us back: my pride fell with my fortunes;
 I'll ask him what he would. Did you call, sir?
 Sir, you have wrestled well and overthrown
 More than your enemies.

Cel. Will you go, coz?

Ros. Have with you. Fare you well.

Exeunt ROSALIND and CELIA.

- Orl.* What passion hangs these weights upon my tongue?
 I cannot speak to her, yet she urged conference.
 O poor Orlando, thou art overthrown!
 Or Charles or something weaker masters thee.

Re-enter LE BEAU.

- Le Beau.* Good sir, I do in friendship counsel you
 To leave this place. Albeit you have deserved
 High commendation, true applause, and love,
 Yet such is now the Duke's condition,
 That he misconstrues all that you have done.
 The Duke is humorous: what he is, indeed,
 More suits you to conceive than I to speak of.
Orl. I thank you, sir: and pray you, tell me this;
 Which of the two was daughter of the Duke,
 That here was at the wrestling?
Le Beau. Neither his daughter, if we judge by manners;
 But yet, indeed, the taller is his daughter;
 The other is daughter to the banish'd Duke,
 And here detain'd by her usurping uncle,
 To keep his daughter company; whose loves
 Are dearer than the natural bond of sisters.
 But I can tell you that of late this Duke
 Hath ta'en displeasure 'gainst his gentle niece,
 Grounded upon no other argument
 But that the people praise her for her virtues,
 And pity her for her good father's sake;
 And, on my life, his malice 'gainst the lady
 Will suddenly break forth. Sir, fare you well:
 Hereafter, in a better world than this,
 I shall desire more love and knowledge of you.

Orl. I rest much bounden to you; fare you well.

[*Exeunt* LE BEAU.

Thus must I from the smoke into the smother;

From tyrant Duke unto a tyrant brother:

But heavenly Rosalind!

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.

A room in the palace.

Enter CELIA *and* ROSALIND.

Cel. Why, cousin! Why, Rosalind! Cupid have mercy! not a word?

Ros. Not one to throw at a dog.

Cel. No, thy words are too precious to be cast away upon curs; throw some of them at me; come, lame me with reasons.

Ros. Then there were two cousins laid up; when the one should be lamed with reasons and the other mad without any.

Cel. But is all this for your father?

Ros. No, some of it is for my child's father. O, how full of briers is this working-day world!

Cel. They are but burs, cousin, thrown upon thee in holiday foolery: if we walk not in the trodden paths, our very petticoats will catch them.

Ros. I could shake them off my coat: these burs are in my heart.

Cel. Hem them away.

Ros. I would try, if I could cry hem and have him.

Cel. Come, come, wrestle with thy affections.

Ros. O, they take the part of a better wrestler than myself!

Cel. O, a good wish upon you! You will try in time, in despite of a fall. But, turning these jests out of service, let us talk in good earnest: is it possible, on such a sudden, you should fall into so strong a liking with old Sir Rowland's youngest son?

Ros. The Duke my father loved his father dearly.

Cel. Doth it therefore ensue that you should love his son dearly? By this kind of chase, I should hate him, for my father hated his father dearly; yet I hate not Orlando.

Ros. No, faith, hate him not, for my sake.

Cel. Why should I not? doth he not deserve well?

Ros. Let me love him for that, and do you love him because I do. Look, here comes the Duke.

Cel. With his eyes full of anger.

Enter DUKE FREDERICK, with LORDS.

Duke F. Mistress, dispatch you with your safest haste
And get you from our court.

Ros. Me, uncle?

Duke F. You, cousin :
Within these ten days if that thou be'st found
So near our public court as twenty miles,
Thou diest for it.

Ros. I do beseech your Grace,
Let me the knowledge of my fault bear with me :
If with myself I hold intelligence,
Or have acquaintance with mine own desires ;
If that I do not dream, or be not frantic,—
As I do trust I am not,—then, dear uncle,
Never so much as in a thought unborn
Did I offend your Highness.

Duke F. Thus do all traitors :
If their purgation did consist in words,
They are as innocent as grace itself ;
Let it suffice thee that I trust thee not.

Ros. Yet your mistrust cannot make me a traitor :
Tell me whereon the likelihood depends.

Duke F. Thou art thy father's daughter ; there's enough.

Ros. So was I when your Highness took his dukedom ;
So was I when your Highness banish'd him :
Treason is not inherited, my lord ;
Or, if we did derive it from our friends,
What's that to me ? My father was no traitor :
Then, good my liege, mistake me not so much
To think my poverty is treacherous.

Cel. Dear sovereign, hear me speak.

Duke F. Ay, Celia ; we stay'd her for your sake,
Else had she with her father ranged along.

Cel. I did not then entreat to have her stay ;
It was your pleasure and your own remorse :
I was too young that time to value her ;
But now I know her : if she be a traitor,
Why so am I ; we still have slept together,
Rose at an instant, learn'd, play'd, eat together,
And wheresoe'er we went, like Juno's swans,
Still we went coupled and inseparable.

- Duke F.* She is too subtle for thee; and her smoothness,
 Her very silence and her patience
 Speak to the people, and they pity her.
 Thou art a fool: she robs thee of thy name;
 And thou wilt show more bright and seem more virtuous
 When she is gone. Then open not thy lips:
 Firm and irrevocable is my doom
 Which I have pass'd upon her; she is banish'd.
Cel. Pronounce that sentence then on me, my liege:
 I cannot live out of her company.
Duke F. You are a fool. You, niece, provide yourself:
 If you outstay the time, upon mine honour,
 And in the greatness of my word, you die.

[*Exeunt DUKE FREDERICK and Lords.*]

- Cel.* O my poor Rosalind, whither wilt thou go?
 Wilt thou change fathers? I will give thee mine.
 I charge thee, be not thou more grieved than I am.
Ros. I have more cause.

- Cel.* Thou hast not, cousin;
 Prithee, be cheerful: know'st thou not, the Duke
 Hath banish'd me, his daughter?

- Ros.* That he hath not.

- Cel.* No, hath not? Rosalind lacks then the love
 Which teacheth thee that thou and I am one:
 Shall we be sunder'd? shall we part, sweet girl?
 No: let my father seek another heir.
 Therefore devise with me how we may fly,
 Whither to go and what to bear with us;
 And do not seek to take your change upon you,
 To bear your griefs yourself and leave me out;
 For, by this heaven, now at our sorrows pale,
 Say what thou canst, I'll go along with thee.

- Ros.* Why, whither shall we go?

- Cel.* To seek my uncle in the forest of Arden.

- Ros.* Alas, what danger will it be to us,
 Maids as we are, to travel forth so far!
 Beauty provoketh thieves sooner than gold.

- Cel.* I'll put myself in poor and mean attire
 And with a kind of umber smirch my face;
 The like do you: so shall we pass along
 And never stir assailants.

- Ros.* Were it not better,

Because that I am more than common tall,
 That I did suit me all points like a man?
 A gallant curtle-axe upon my thigh,
 A boar-spear in my hand; and—in my heart
 Lie there what hidden woman's fear there will—
 We'll have a swashing and a martial outside,
 As many other mannish cowards have
 That do outface it with their semblances.

Cel. What shall I call thee when thou art a man?

Ros. I'll have no worse a name than Jove's own page;
 And therefore look you call me Ganymede.
 But what will you be call'd?

Cel. Something that hath a reference to my state:
 No longer Celia, but Aliena.

Ros. But, cousin, what if we assay'd to steal
 The clownish fool out of your father's court?
 Would he not be a comfort to our travel?

Cel. He'll go along o'er the wide world with me;
 Leave me alone to woo him. Let's away,
 And get our jewels and our wealth together;
 Devise the fittest time and safest way
 To hide us from pursuit that will be made
 After my flight. Now go we in content
 To liberty and not to banishment

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT SECOND.

SCENE I.

The Forest of Arden.

*Enter DUKE SENIOR, AMIENS. and two or three LORDS,
 like foresters.*

Duke S. Now, my co-mates and brothers in exile,
 Hath not old custom made this life more sweet
 That that of painted pomp? Are not these woods
 More free from peril than the envious court?
 Here feel we but the penalty of Adam,
 The seasons' difference; as the icy fang
 And churlish chiding of the winter's wind,
 Which, when it bites and blows upon my body,
 Even till I shrink with cold, I smile and say
 "This is no flattery: these are counsellors
 That feelingly persuade me what I am."

Sweet are the uses of adversity;
Which, like the toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head:
And this our life exempt from public haunt
Finds tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
Sermons in stones and good in every thing.
I would not change it.

Ami. Happy is your Grace,
Than can translate the stubbornness of fortune
Into so quiet and so sweet a style.

Duke S. Come, shall we go and kill us venison?
And yet it irks me the poor dappled fools,
Being native burghers of this desert city,
Should in their own confines with forked heads
Have their round haunches gored.

First Ld. Indeed, my lord,
The melancholy Jaques grieves at that,
And, in that kind, swears you do more usurp
Than doth your brother that hath banish'd you.
Today my Lord of Amiens and myself
Did steal behind him as he lay along
Under an oak whose antique root peeps out
Upon the brook that brawls along this wood:
To the which place a poor sequester'd stag,
That from the hunter's aim had ta'en a hurt,
Did come to languish, and indeed, my lord,
The wretched animal heaved forth such groans,
That their discharge did stretch his leathern coat
Almost to bursting, and the big round tears
Coursed one another down his innocent nose
In piteous chase; and thus the hairy fool,
Much marked of the melancholy Jaques,
Stood on the extremest verge of the swift brook,
Augmenting it with tears.

Duke S. But what said Jaques?
Did he not moralize this spectacle?

First Ld. O, yes, into a thousand similes.
First, for his weeping into the needless stream;
"Poor deer," quoth he, "thou makest a testament
As wordlings do, giving thy sum of more
To that which had too much": then, being there alone,
Left and abandon'd of his velvet friends;
" 'Tis right," quoth he; "thus misery doth part

The flux of company": anon a careless herd,
 Full of the pasture, jumps along by him
 And never stays to greet him; "Ay," quoth Jaques,
 "Sweep on, you fat and greasy citizens;
 'Tis just the fashion: wherefore do you look
 Upon that poor and broken bankrupt there?"
 Thus mōst invectively he pierceth through
 The body of the country, city, court,
 Yea, and of this our life; swearing that we
 Are mere usurpers, tyrants and what's worse,
 To fright the animals and to kill them up
 In their assign'd and native dwelling-place.

Duke S. And did you leave him in this contemplation?

Sec. Ld. We did, my lord, weeping and commenting
 Upon the sobbing deer.

Duke S. Show me the place:
 I love to cope him in these sullen fits,
 For then he's full of matter.

First Ld. I'll bring you to him straight.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

A room in the palace.

Enter DUKE FREDERICK, with LORDS.

Duke F. Can it be possible that no man saw them?
 It cannot be: some villains of my court
 Are of consent and sufferance in this.

First Ld. I cannot hear of any that did see her.
 The ladies, her attendants of her chamber,
 Saw her a-bed, and in the morning early
 They found the bed untreasured of their mistress.

Sec. Ld. My lord, the roynish clown, at whom so oft
 Your Grace was wont to laugh, is also missing.
 Hisperia, the princess' gentlewoman,
 Confesses that she secretly o'erheard
 Your daughter and her cousin much commend
 The parts and graces of the wrestler
 That did but lately foil the sinewy Charles;
 And she believes, wherever they are gone,
 That youth is surely in their company.

Duke F. Send to his brother; fetch that gallant hither;
 If he be absent, bring his brother to me;

I'll make him find him: do this suddenly,
 And let not search and inquisition quail
 To bring again these foolish runaways.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

Before Oliver's house.

Enter ORLANDO and ADAM, meeting.

Orl. Who's there?

Adam. What, my young master? O my gentle master!
 O my sweet master! O you memory
 Of old Sir Rowland! Why, what make you here?
 Why are you virtuous? Why do people love you?
 And wherefore are you gentle, strong and valiant?
 Why would you be so fond to overcome
 The bonny priser of the humorous Duke?
 Your praise is come too swiftly home before you.
 Know you not, master, to some kind of men
 Their graces serve them but as enemies?
 No more do yours: your virtues, gentle master,
 Are sanctified and holy traitors to you.
 O, what a world is this, when what is comely
 Envenoms him that bears it!

Orl. Why, what's the matter?

Adam. O unhappy youth!
 Come not within these doors; within this roof
 The enemy of all your graces lives:
 Your brother—no, no brother; yet the son—
 Yet not the son, I will not call him son,
 Of him I was about to call his father,—
 Hath heard your praises, and this night he means
 To burn the lodging where you use to lie
 And you within it: if he fail of that,
 He will have other means to cut you off.
 I overheard him and his practices.
 This is no place; this house is but a butchery:
 Abhor it, fear it, do not enter it.

Orl. Why, whither, Adam, wouldst thou have me go?

Adam. No matter whither, so you come not here.

Orl. What, wouldst thou have me go and beg my food?
 Or with a base and boisterous sword enforce
 A thievish living on the common road?

This I must do, or know not what to do:
Yet this I will not do, do how I can;
I rather will subject me to the malice
Of a diverted blood and bloody brother.

Adam. But do not so. I have five hundred crowns,
The thrifty hire I saved under your father,
Which I did store to be my foster-nurse
When service should in my old limbs lie lame,
And unregarded age in corners thrown:
Take that, and He that doth the ravens feed,
Yea, providently caters for the sparrow,
Be comfort to my age! Here is the gold;
All this I give you. Let me be your servant:
Though I look old, yet I am strong and lusty;
For in my youth I never did apply
Hot and rebellious liquors in my blood,
Nor did not with unbashful forehead woo
The means of weakness and debility;
Therefore my age is as a lusty winter,
Frosty, but kindly: let me go with you;
I'll do the service of a younger man
In all your business and necessities.

Orl. O good old man, how well in thee appears
The constant service of the antique world,
When service sweat for duty, not for meed!
Thou art not for the fashion of these times,
Where none will sweat but for promotion,
And having that do choke their service up
Even with the having: it is not so with thee.
But, poor old man, thou prunest a rotten tree,
That cannot so much as a blossom yield
In lieu of all thy pains and husbandry.
But come thy ways; we'll go along together,
And ere we have thy youthful wages spent,
We'll light upon some settled low content.

Adam. Master, go on, and I will follow thee,
To the last gasp, with truth and loyalty.
From seventeen years till now almost fourscore
Here lived I, but now live here no more.
At seventeen years many their fortunes seek;
But at fourscore it is too late a week:
Yet fortune cannot recompense me better
Than to die well and not my master's debtor. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV

The Forest of Arden.

*Enter ROSALIND for Ganymede, CELIA for Aliena,
and TOUCHSTONE.*

Ros. O Jupiter, how weary are my spirits!

Touch. I care not for my spirits, if my legs were not weary.

Ros. I could find in my heart to disgrace my man's apparel and to cry like a woman; but I must comfort the weaker vessel, as doublet and hose ought to show itself courageous to petticoat: therefore, courage, good Aliena.

Cel. I pray you, bear with me; I cannot go no further.

Touch. For my part, I had rather bear with you than bear you: yet I should bear no cross, if I did bear you; for I think you have no money in your purse.

Ros. Well, this is the forest of Arden.

Touch. Ay, now am I in Arden; the more fool I; when I was at home, I was in a better place: but travellers must be content.

Ros. Ay, be so, good Touchstone.

Enter CORIN and SILVIUS.

Look you, who comes here; a young man and an old in solemn talk.

Cor. That is the way to make her scorn you still.

Sil. O Corin, that thou knew'st how I do love her!

Cor. I partly guess; for I have loved ere now.

Sil. No, Corin, being old, thou canst not guess,
Though in thy youth thou wast as true a lover
As ever sigh'd upon a midnight pillow:

But if thy love were ever like to mine,—

As sure I think did never man love so,—

How many actions most ridiculous

Hast thou been drawn to by thy fantasy?

Cor. Into a thousand that I have forgotten.

Sil. O, thou didst then ne'er love so heartily!

If thou remember'st not the slightest folly

That ever love did make thee run into,

Thou hast not loved:

Or if thou hast not sat as I do now,

Wearing thy hearer in thy mistress' praise,

Thou hast not loved:

Or if thou hast not broke from company



MARY ANDERSON AND MRS. STIRLING AS JULIET AND THE NURSE. 1883

Abruptly, as my passion now makes me,
Thou hast not loved.

O Phebe, Phebe, Phebe!

[*Exit.*

Ros. Alas, poor shepherd! searching of thy wound,
I have by hard adventure found mine own.

Touch. And I mine. I remember, when I was in love I broke my sword upon a stone and bid him take that for coming a-night to Jane Smile: and I remember the kissing of her batlet and the cows' dugs that her pretty chopt hands had milked: and I remember the wooing of a peascod instead of her; from whom I took two cods and, giving her them again, said with weeping tears, "Wear these for my sake." We that are true lovers run into strange capers; but as all is mortal in nature, so is all nature in love mortal in folly.

Ros. Thou speakest wiser than thou art ware of.

Touch. Nay, I shall ne'er be ware of mine own wit till I break my shins against it.

Ros. Jove, Jove! this shepherd's passion
Is much upon my fashion.

Touch. And mine; but it grows something stale with me.

Cel. I pray you, one of you question yond man
If he for gold will give us any food:
I faint almost to death.

Touch. Holla, you clown!

Ros. Peace, fool: he's not thy kinsman.

Cor. Who calls?

Touch. Your betters, sir.

Cor. Else are they very wretched.

Ros. Peace, I say. Good even to you friend.

Cor. And to you, gentle sir, and to you all.

Ros. I prithee, shepherd, if that love or gold
Can in this desert place buy entertainment,
Bring us where we may rest ourselves and feed:
Here's a young maid with travel much oppress'd
And faints for succour.

Cor. Fair sir, I pity her
And wish, for her sake more than for mine own,
My fortunes were more able to relieve her;
But I am shepherd to another man
And do not shear the fleeces that I graze:
My master is of churlish disposition
And little recks to find the way to heaven

- By doing deeds of hospitality:
 Besides, his cote, his flocks and bounds of feed
 Are now on sale, and at our sheepecote now,
 By reason of his absence, there is nothing
 That you will feed on; but what is, come see,
 And in my voice most welcome shall you be.
- Ros.* What is he that shall buy his flock and pasture?
- Cor.* That young swain that you saw here but erewhile,
 That little cares for buying any thing.
- Ros.* I pray thee, if it stand with honesty,
 Buy thou the cottage, pasture and the flock,
 And thou shalt have to pay for it of us.
- Cel.* And we will mend thy wages. I like this place,
 And willingly could waste my time in it.
- Cor.* Assuredly the thing is to be sold:
 Go with me: if you like upon report
 The soil, the profit and this kind of life,
 I will your very faithful feeder be
 And buy it with your gold right suddenly. [Exeunt.]

SCENE V

*The forest.**Enter AMIENS, JAQUES, and others.*

SONG.

- Ami.* Under the greenwood tree
 Who loves to lie with me,
 And turn his merry note
 Unto the sweet bird's throat,
 Come hither, come hither, come hither:
 Here shall he see
 No enemy
 But winter and rough weather.
- Jaq.* More, more, I prithee, more.
- Ami.* It will make you melancholy, Monsieur Jaques.
- Jaq.* I thank it. More, I prithee, more. I can suck melancholy
 out of a song, as a weasel sucks eggs. More, I prithee,
 more.
- Ami.* My voice is ragged: I know I cannot please you.
- Jaq.* I do not desire you to please me; I do desire you to sing.
 Come, more; another stanza: call you 'em stanzas?
- Ami.* What you will, Monsieur Jaques.

Jaq. Nay, I care not for their names; they owe me nothing. Will you sing?

Ami. More at your request than to please myself.

Jaq. Well, then, if ever I thank any man, I'll thank you; but that they call compliment is like the encounter of two dog-apes, and when a man thanks me heartily, methinks I have given him a penny and he renders me the beggarly thanks. Come, sing; and you that will not hold your tongues.

Ami. Well, I'll end the song. Sirs, cover the while; the Duke will drink under this tree. He hath been all this day to look you.

Jaq. And I have been all this day to avoid him. He is too disputable for my company: I think of as many matters as he; but I give heaven thanks, and make no boast of them. Come, warble, come.

SONG.

Who doth ambition shun, [*All together here.*

And loves to live i' the sun,

Seeking the food he eats,

And pleased with what he gets,

Come hither, come hither, come hither:

Here shall he see

No enemy

But winter and rough weather.

Jaq. I'll give you a verse to this note, that I made yesterday in despite of my invention.

Ami. And I'll sing it.

Jaq. Thus it goes:—

If it do come to pass

That any man turn ass,

Leaving his wealth and ease

A stubborn will to please,

Ducdame, ducdame, ducdame:

Here shall he see

Gross fools as he,

And if he will come to me.

Ami. What's that "ducdame"?

Jaq. 'Tis a Greek invocation, to call fools into a circle. I'll go sleep, if I can; if I cannot, I'll rail against all the first-born of Egypt.

Ami. And I'll go seek the Duke: his banquet is prepared.
[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE VI

The forest.

Enter ORLANDO and ADAM.

Adam. Dear master, I can go no further; O, I die for food! Here lie I down, and measure out my grave. Farewell, kind master.

Orl. Why, how now, Adam! no greater heart in thee? Live a little; comfort a little; cheer thyself a little. If this uncouth forest yield any thing savage, I will either be food for it or bring it for food to thee. Thy conceit is nearer death than thy powers. For my sake be comfortable; hold death awhile at the arm's end: I will here be with thee presently; and if I bring thee not something to eat, I will give thee leave to die: but if thou diest before I come, thou art a mocker of my labour. Well said! thou lookest cheerly, and I'll be with thee quickly. Yet thou liest in the bleak air: come, I will bear thee to some shelter; and thou shalt not die for lack of a dinner, if there live any thing in this desert. Cheerly, good Adam! *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE VII

The forest. A table set out.

Enter DUKE SENIOR, AMIENS, and LORDS, like outlaws.

Duke S. I think he be transform'd into a beast;
 For I can no where find him like a man.

Fst. Ld. My lord, he is but even now gone hence:
 Here was he merry, hearing of a song.

Duke S. If he, compact of jars, grow musical,
 We shall have shortly discord in the spheres.
 Go, seek him: tell him I would speak with him.

Enter JAQUES.

Fst. Ld. He saves my labour by his own approach.

Duke S. Why, how now, monsieur! what a life is this,
 That your poor friends must woo your company?
 What, you look merrily!

Jaq. A fool, a fool! I met a fool i' the forest,
 A motley fool; a miserable world!

As I do live by food, I met a fool;
 Who laid him down and bask'd him in the sun,
 And rail'd on Lady Fortune in good terms,
 In good set terms, and yet a motley fool.
 "Good morrow, fool," quoth I. "No sir," quoth he,
 "Call me not fool till heaven hath sent me fortune:"
 And then he drew a dial from his poke,
 And, looking on it with lack-lustre eye,
 Says very wisely, "It is ten o'clock:
 Thus we may see," quoth he, "how the world wags:
 'Tis but an hour ago since it was nine;
 And after one hour more 'twill be eleven;
 And so, from hour to hour, we ripe and ripe,
 And then, from hour to hour, we rot and rot;
 And thereby hangs a tale." When I did hear
 The motley fool thus moral on the time,
 My lungs began to crow like chanticleer,
 That fools should be so deep-contemplative;
 And I did laugh sans intermission
 An hour by his dial. O noble fool!
 A worthy fool! Motley's the only wear.

Duke S. What fool is this?

Jaq. O worthy fool! One that hath been a courtier,
 And says, if ladies be but young and fair,
 They have the gift to know it: and in his brain,
 Which is as dry as the remainder biscuit
 After a voyage, he hath strange places cramm'd
 With observation, the which he vents
 In mangled forms. O that I were a fool!
 I am ambitious for a motley coat.

Duke S. Thou shalt have one.

Jaq. It is my only suit;
 Provided that you weed your better judgments
 Of all opinion that grows rank in them
 That I am wise. I must have liberty
 Withal, as large a charter as the wind,
 To blow on whom I please; for so fools have;
 And they that are most galled with my folly,
 They most must laugh. And why, sir, must they so?
 The "why" is plain as way to parish church:
 He that a fool doth very wisely hit
 Doth very foolishly, although he smart,
 Not to seem senseless of the bob: if not,

The wise man's folly is anatomized
 Even by the squandering glances of the fool.
 Invest me in my motley; give me leave
 To speak my mind, and I will through and through
 Cleanse the foul body of the infected world,
 If they will patiently receive my medicine.

Duke S. Fie on thee! I can tell what thou wouldst do.

Jaq. What, for a counter, would I do but good?

Duke S. Most mischievous foul sin, in chiding sin:
 For thou thyself hast been a libertine,
 As sensual as the brutish sting itself;
 And all the embossed sores and headed evils,
 That thou with license of free foot has caught,
 Wouldst thou disgorge into the general world.

Jaq. Why, who cries out on pride,
 That can therein tax any private party?
 Doth it not flow as hugely as the sea,
 Till that the weary very means do ebb?
 What woman in the city do I name,
 When that I say the city-woman bears
 The cost of princes on unworthy shoulders?
 Who can come in and say that I mean her,
 When such a one as she such is her neighbour?
 Or what is he of basest function,
 That says his bravery is not on my cost,
 Thinking that I mean him, but therein suits
 His folly to the mettle of my speech?
 There then; how then? what then? Let me see wherein
 My tongue hath wrong'd him: if it do him right,
 Then he hath wrong'd himself; if he be free,
 Why then my taxing like a wild-goose flies,
 Unclaim'd of any man. But who comes here?

Enter ORLANDO, with his sword drawn.

Orl. Forbear, and eat no more.

Jaq. Why I have eat none yet.

Orl. Nor shalt not, till necessity be served.

Jaq. Of what kind should this cock come of?

Duke S. Art thou thus bolden'd, man, by thy distress?
 Or else a rude despiser of good manners,
 That in civility thou seem'st so empty?

Orl. You touch'd my vein at first: the thorny point
 Of bare distress hath ta'en from me the show
 Of smooth civility: yet am I inland bred

And know some nurture. But forbear, I say:
He dies that touches any of this fruit
Till I and my affairs are answered.

Jaq. An you will not be answered with reason, I must die.

Duke S. What would you have? Your gentleness shall force,
More than your force move us to gentleness.

Orl. I almost die for food; and let me have it.

Duke S. Sit down and feed, and welcome to our table.

Orl. Speak you so gently? Pardon me, I pray you:
I thought that all things had been savage here;
And therefore put I on the countenance
Of stern commandment. But whate'er you are
That in this desert inaccessible,
Under the shade of melancholy boughs,
Lose and neglect the creeping hours of time;
If ever you have look'd on better days,
If ever been where bells have knoll'd to church,
If ever sat at any good man's feast,
If ever from your eyelids wiped a tear
And know what 'tis to pity and be pitied,
Let gentleness my strong enforcement be:
In the which hope I blush, and hide my sword.

Duke S. True is it that we have seen better days,
And have with holy bell been knoll'd to church,
And sat at good men's feasts, and wiped our eyes
Of drops that sacred pity hath engender'd:
And therefore sit you down in gentleness
And take upon command what help we have
That to your wanting may be minister'd.

Orl. Then but forbear your food a little while,
Whiles, like a doe, I go to find my fawn
And give it food. There is an old poor man,
Who after me hath many a weary step
Limp'd in pure love: till he first sufficed,
Oppress'd with two weak evils, age and hunger,
I will not touch a bit.

Duke S. Go find him out,
And we will nothing waste till you return.

Orl. I thank ye; and be blest for your good comfort! [*Exit.*]

Duke S. Thou seest we are not all alone unhappy:
This wide and universal theatre
Presents more woeful pageants than the scene
Wherein we play in.

Jaq.

All the world's a stage,
 And all the men and women merely players:
 They have their exits and their entrances;
 And one man in his time plays many parts,
 His acts being seven ages. At first the infant,
 Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms.
 Then the whining school-boy, with his satchel
 And shining morning face, creeping like snail
 Unwillingly to school. And then the lover,
 Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
 Made to his mistress' eyebrow. Then a soldier,
 Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
 Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
 Seeking the bubble reputation
 Even in the cannon's mouth. And then the
 justice,
 In fair round belly with good capon lined,
 With eyes severe and beard of formal cut,
 Full of wise saws and modern instances;
 And so he plays his part. The sixth age shifts
 Into the lean and slipper'd pantaloon,
 With spectacles on nose and pouch on side,
 His youthful hose, well saved, a world too wide
 For his shrunk shank; and his big manly voice,
 Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
 And whistles in his sound. Last scene of all,
 That ends this strange eventful history,
 Is second childishness and mere oblivion,
 Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans every thing.

Re-enter ORLANDO, with ADAM.

Duke S. Welcome. Set down your venerable burthen,
 And let him feed.

Orl. I thank you most for him.

Adam. So had you need:

I scarce can speak to thank you for myself.

Duke S. Welcome; fall to: I will not trouble you
 As yet, to question you about your fortunes.
 Give us some music; and, good cousin, sing.

SONG.

Ami.

Blow, blow, thou winter wind,
 Thou art not so unkind
 As man's ingratitude;

Thy tooth is not so keen,
Because thou art not seen,

Although thy breath be rude.

Heigh-ho! sing, heigh-ho! unto the green holly:
Most friendship is feigning, most loving mere folly:
Then, heigh-ho, the holly!
This life is most jolly.

Freeze, freeze, thou bitter sky,
That dost not bite so nigh

As benefits forgot:

Though thou the waters warp,
Thy sting is not so sharp

As friend remember'd not.

Heigh-ho! sing, &c.

Duke S. If that you were the good Sir Rowland's son,
As you have whisper'd faithfully you were,
And as mine eye doth his effigies witness
Most truly limn'd and living in your face,
Be truly welcome hither: I am the Duke
That loved your father: the residue of your fortune,
Go to my cave and tell me. Good old man,
Thou art right welcome as thy master is.
Support him by the arm. Give me your hand,
And let me all your fortunes understand. [*Exeunt.*]

ACT THIRD

SCENE I

A room in the palace.

Enter DUKE FREDERICK, LORDS, and OLIVER.

Duke F. Not see him since? Sir, sir, that cannot be:
But were I not the better part made mercy,
I should not seek an absent argument
Of my revenge, thou present. But look to it:
Find out thy brother, wheresoe'er he is;
Seek him with candle; bring him dead or living
Within this twelvemonth, or turn thou no more
To seek a living in our territory.
Thy lands and all things that thou dost call thine
Worth seizure do we seize into our hands,

Till thou canst quit thee by thy brother's mouth
Of what we think against thee.

Oli. O that your Highness knew my heart in this!
I never loved my brother in my life.

Duke F. More villain thou. Well, push him out of doors;
And let my officers of such a nature
Make an extent upon his house and lands:
Do this expediently and turn him going. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II

The Forest.

Enter ORLANDO, with a paper.

Orl. Hang there, my verse, in witness of my love:
And thou, thrice-crowned queen of night, survey
With thy chaste eye, from thy pale sphere above,
Thy huntress' name that my full life doth sway.
O Rosalind! these trees shall be my books
And in their barks my thoughts I'll character;
That every eye which in this forest looks
Shall see thy virtue witness'd every where.
Run, run, Orlando; carve on every tree
The fair, the chaste and unexpressive she. [*Exit.*

Enter CORIN and TOUCHSTONE.

Cor. And how like you this shepherd's life, Master Touchstone?
Touch. Truly, shepherd, in respect of itself, it is a good life; but
in respect that it is a shepherd's life, it is naught. In
respect that it is solitary, I like it very well; but in respect
that it is private, it is a very vile life. Now, in respect
it is in the fields, it pleaseth me well; but in respect it is
not in the court, it is tedious. As it is a spare life, look
you, it fits my humour well; but as there is no more plenty
in it, it goes much against my stomach. Hast any philosophy
in thee, shepherd?

Cor. No more but that I know the more one sickens the worse
at ease he is; and that he that wants money, means and
content is without three good friends; that the property
of rain is to wet and fire to burn; that good pasture makes
fat sheep, and that a great cause of the night is lack of
the sun; that he that hath learned no wit by nature nor
art may complain of good breeding or comes of a very dull
kindred.

- Touch.* Such a one is a natural philosopher. Wast ever in court, shepherd?
- Cor.* No, truly.
- Touch.* Then thou art damned.
- Cor.* Nay, I hope.
- Touch.* Truly, thou art damned, like an ill-roasted egg all on one side.
- Cor.* For not being at court? Your reason.
- Touch.* Why, if thou never wast at court, thou never sawest good manners; if thou never sawest good manners, then thy manners must be wicked; and wickedness is sin, and sin is damnation. Thou art in a parlous state, shepherd.
- Cor.* Not a whit, Touchstone: those that are good manners at the court are as ridiculous in the country as the behaviour of the country is most mockable at the court. You told me you salute not at the court, but you kiss your hands: that courtesy would be uncleanly, if courtiers were shepherds.
- Touch.* Instance, briefly; come, instance.
- Cor.* Why, we are still handling our ewes, and their fells, you know, are greasy.
- Touch.* Why, do not your courtier's hands sweat? and is not the grease of a mutton as wholesome as the sweat of a man? Shallow, shallow. A better instance, I say; come.
- Cor.* Besides, our hands are hard.
- Touch.* Your lips will feel them the sooner. Shallow again. A more sounder instance, come.
- Cor.* And they are often tarred over with the surgery of our sheep; and would you have us kiss tar? The courtier's hands are perfumed with civet.
- Touch.* Most shallow man! thou worm's-meat, in respect of a good piece of flesh indeed! Learn of the wise, and perpend: civet is of a baser birth than tar, the very uncleanly flux of a cat. Mend the instance, shepherd.
- Cor.* You have too courtly a wit for me: I'll rest.
- Touch.* Wilt thou rest damned? God help thee, shallow man! God make incision in thee! thou art raw.
- Cor.* Sir, I am a true labourer: I earn that I eat, get that I wear, owe no man hate, envy no man's happiness, glad of other men's good, content with my harm, and the greatest of my pride is to see my ewes graze and my lambs suck.

Touch. That is another simple sin in you, to bring the ewes and the rams together and to offer to get your living by the copulation of cattle; to be bawd to a bell-wether, and to betray a she-lamb of a twelvemonth to a crooked-pated, old, cuckoldly ram, out of all reasonable match. If thou beest not damned for this, the devil himself will have no shepherds; I cannot see else how thou shouldst 'scape.

Cor. Here comes young Master Ganymede, my new mistress's brother.

Enter ROSALIND, with a paper, reading.

Ros. From the east to western Ind,
No jewel is like Rosalind.
Her worth, being mounted on the wind,
Through all the world bears Rosalind.
All the pictures fairest lined
Are but black to Rosalind.
Let no face be kept in mind
But the fair of Rosalind.

Touch. I'll rhyme you so eight years together, dinners and suppers and sleeping-hours excepted: it is the right butter-women's rank to market.

Ros. Out, fool!

Touch. For a taste:

If a hart do lack a hind,
Let him seek out Rosalind.
If the cat will after kind,
So be sure will Rosalind.
Winter garments must be lined,
So must slender Rosalind.
They that reap must sheaf and bind;
Then to cart with Rosalind.
Sweetest nut hath sourest rind,
Such a nut is Rosalind.
He that sweetest rose will find,
Must find love's prick and Rosalind.

This is the very false gallop of verses: why do you infect yourself with them?

Ros. Peace, you dull fool! I found them on a tree.

Touch. Truly, the tree yields bad fruit.

Ros. I'll graff it with you, and then I shall graff it with a medlar: then it will be the earliest fruit i' the country; for

you'll be rotten ere you be half ripe, and that's the right virtue of the medlar.

Touch. You have said; but whether wisely or no, let the forest judge.

Enter CELIA, with a writing.

Ros. Peace!

Here comes my sister, reading: stand aside.

Cel. [*reads.*] Why should this a desert be?

For it is unpeopled? No;
Tongues I'll hang on every tree,
That shall civil sayings show:
Some, how brief the life of man
Runs his erring pilgrimage,
That the stretching of a span
Buckles in his sum of age;
Some, of violated vows
'Twixt the souls of friend and friend:
But upon the fairest boughs,
Or at every sentence end,
Will I Rosalinda write,
Teaching all that read to know
The quintessence of every sprite
Heaven would in little show.
Therefore Heaven Nature charged
That one body should be fill'd
With all graces wide-enlarged:
Nature presently distill'd
Hei'en's cheek, but not her heart,
Cleopatra's majesty,
Atalanta's better part,
Sad Lucretia's modesty.
Thus Rosalind of many parts
By heavenly synod was devised;
Of many faces, eyes and hearts,
To have the touches dearest prized.
Heaven would that she these gifts should have,
And I to live and die her slave.

Ros. O most gentle pulpiter! what tedious homily of love have you wearied your parishioners withal, and never cried "Have patience, good people"!

Cel. How now! back, friends! Shepherd, go off a little. Go with him, sirrah.

Touch. Come, shepherd, let us make an honourable retreat; though not with bag and baggage, yet with scrip and scrippage.

[*Exeunt CORIN and TOUCHSTONE.*]

Cel. Didst thou hear these verses?

Ros. O, yes, I heard them all, and more too; for some of them had in them more feet than the verses would bear.

Cel. That's no matter: the feet might bear the verses.

Ros. Ay, but the feet were lame and could not bear themselves without the verse and therefore stood lamely in the verse.

Cel. But didst thou hear without wondering how thy name should be hanged and carved upon these trees?

Ros. I was seven of the nine days out of the wonder before you came; for look here what I found on a palm tree. I was never so be-rhymed since Pythagoras' time, that I was an Irish rat, which I can hardly remember.

Cel. Trow you who hath done this?

Ros. Is it a man?

Cel. And a chain, that you once wore, about his neck. Change you colour?

Ros. I prithee, who?

Cel. O Lord, Lord! it is a hard matter for friends to meet; but mountains may be removed with earthquakes and so encounter.

Ros. Nay, but who is it?

Cel. Is it possible?

Ros. Nay, I prithee now with most petitionary vehemence, tell me who it is.

Cel. O wonderful, wonderful, and most wonderful wonderful! and yet again wonderful, and after that, out of all hooping!

Ros. Good my complexion! dost thou think, though I am caparisoned like a man, I have a doublet and hose in my disposition? One inch of delay more is a South-sea of discovery; I prithee, tell me who is it quickly, and speak apace. I would thou couldst stammer, that thou might'st pour this concealed man out of thy mouth, as wine comes out of a narrow-mouthed bottle, either too much at once, or none at all. I prithee, take the cork out of thy mouth that I may drink thy tidings.

Cel. So you may put a man in your belly.

Ros. Is he of God's making? What manner of man? Is his head worth a hat? Or his chin worth a beard?

Cel. Nay, he hath but a little beard.

- Ros.* Why, God will send more, if the man will be thankful: let me stay the growth of his beard, if thou delay me not the knowledge of his chin.
- Cel.* It is young Orlando, that tripped up the wrestler's heels and your heart both in an instant.
- Ros.* Nay, but the devil take mocking: speak sad brow and true maid.
- Cel.* I' faith, coz, 'tis he.
- Ros.* Orlando?
- Cel.* Orlando.
- Ros.* Alas the day! what shall I do with my doublet and hose? What did he when thou sawest him? What said he? How looked he? Wherein went he? What makes he here? Did he ask for me? Where remains he? How parted he with thee? and when shalt thou see him again? Answer me in one word.
- Cel.* You must borrow me Gargantua's mouth first: 'tis a word too great for any mouth of this age's size. To say ay and no to these particulars is more than to answer in a catechism.
- Ros.* But doth he know that I am in this forest and in man's apparel? Looks he as freshly as he did the day he wrestled?
- Cel.* It is as easy to count atomies as to resolve the propositions of a lover; but take a taste of my finding him, and relish it with good observance. I found him under a tree, like a dropped acorn.
- Ros.* It may well be called Jove's tree, when it drops forth such fruit.
- Cel.* Give me audience, good madam.
- Ros.* Proceed.
- Cel.* There lay he, stretched along, like a wounded knight.
- Ros.* Though it be pity to see such a sight, it well becomes the ground.
- Cel.* Cry "holla" to thy tongue, I prithee; it curvets unseasonably. He was furnished like a hunter.
- Ros.* O, ominous! he comes to kill my heart.
- Cel.* I would sing my song without a burden: thou bringest me out of tune.
- Ros.* Do you not know I am a woman? when I think, I must speak. Sweet, say on.
- Cel.* You bring me out. Soft! comes he not here?

Enter ORLANDO and JAQUES.

- Ros.* 'Tis he: slink by, and note him.
Jaq. I thank you for your company; but, good faith, I had as lief have been myself alone.
Orl. And so had I; but yet, for fashion sake,
I thank you too for your society.
Jaq. God buy you: let's meet as little as we can.
Orl. I do desire we may be better strangers.
Jaq. I pray you, mar no more trees with writing love-songs in their barks.
Orl. I pray you, mar no moe of my verses with reading them ill-favouredly.
Jaq. Rosalind is your love's name?
Orl. Yes, just.
Jaq. I do not like her name.
Orl. There was no thought of pleasing you when she was christened.
Jaq. What stature is she of?
Orl. Just as high as my heart.
Jaq. You are full of pretty answers. Have you not been acquainted with goldsmiths' wives, and conned them out of rings?
Orl. Not so; but I answer you right painted cloth, from whence you have studied your questions.
Jaq. You have a nimble wit: I think 'twas made of Atalanta's heels. Will you sit down with me? and we two will rail against our mistress the world, and all our misery.
Orl. I will chide no breather in the world but myself, against whom I know most faults.
Jaq. The worst fault you have is to be in love.
Orl. 'Tis a fault I will not change for your best virtue. I am weary of you.
Jaq. By my troth, I was seeking for a fool when I found you.
Orl. He is drowned in the brook: look but in, and you shall see him.
Jaq. There I shall see mine own figure.
Orl. Which I take to be either a fool or a cipher.
Jaq. I'll tarry no longer with you: farewell, good Signior Love.
Orl. I am glad of your departure: adieu, good Monsieur Melancholy. [*Exit Jaques.*]
Ros. [*aside to CELIA.*] I will speak to him like a saucy lackey, and under that habit play the knave with him. Do you hear, forester?
Orl. Very well: what would you?



SCENE FROM HENRY VIII, AS PRESENTED BY THE BROWN UNIVERSITY DRAMATIC SOCIETY

- Ros.* I pray you, what is't o'clock?
Orl. You should ask me what time o' day: there's no clock in the forest.
- Ros.* Then there is no true lover in the forest; else sighing every minute and groaning every hour would detect the lazy foot of Time as well as a clock.
- Orl.* And why not the swift foot of Time? had not that been as proper?
- Ros.* By no means, sir: Time travels in divers paces with divers persons. I'll tell you who Time ambles withal, who Time trots withal, who Time gallops withal and who he stands still withal.
- Orl.* I prithee, who doth he trot withal?
Ros. Marry, he trots hard with a young maid between the contract of her marriage and the day it is solemnized: if the interim be but a se'nnight, Time's pace is so hard that it seems the length of seven year.
- Orl.* Who ambles Time withal?
Ros. With a priest that lacks Latin, and a rich man that hath not the gout; for the one sleeps easily because he cannot study, and the other lives merrily because he feels no pain; the one lacking the burden of lean and wasteful learning, the other knowing no burden of heavy tedious penury: these Time ambles withal.
- Orl.* Who doth he gallop withal?
Ros. With a thief to the gallows; for though he go as softly as foot can fall, he thinks himself too soon there.
- Orl.* Who stays it still withal?
Ros. With lawyers in the vacation; for they sleep between term and term and then they perceive not how Time moves.
- Orl.* Where dwell you, pretty youth?
Ros. With this shepherdess, my sister: here in the skirts of the forest, like fringe upon a petticoat?
- Orl.* Are you native of this place?
Ros. As the cony that you see dwell where she is kindled.
Orl. Your accent is something finer than you could purchase in so removed a dwelling.
- Ros.* I have been told so of many: but indeed an old religious uncle of mine taught me to speak, who was in his youth an inland man; one that knew courtship too well, for there he fell in love. I have heard him read many lectures against it, and I thank God I am not a woman, to be

touched with so many giddy offences as he hath generally taxed their whole sex withal.

Orl. Can you remember any of the principal evils that he laid to the charge of women?

Ros. There were none principal; they were all like one another as half-pence are, every one fault seeming monstrous till his fellow-fault came to match it.

Orl. I prithee, recount some of them.

Ros. No, I will not cast away my physic but on those that are sick. There is a man haunts the forest, that abuses our young plants with carving Rosalind on their barks; hangs odes upon hawthorns and elegies on brambles; all, forsooth, deifying the name of Rosalind: if I could meet that fancy-monger, I would give him some good counsel, for he seems to have the quotidian of love upon him.

Orl. I am he that is so love-shaked: I pray you, tell me your remedy.

Ros. There is none of my uncle's marks upon you: he taught me how to know a man in love; in which cage of rushes I am sure you are not prisoner.

Orl. What were his marks?

Ros. A lean cheek, which you have not; a blue eye and sunken, which you have not; an unquestionable spirit, which you have not; a beard neglected, which you have not; but I pardon you for that, for simply your having in beard is a younger brother's revenue: then your hose should be ungartered, your bonnet unbanded, your sleeve unbuttoned, your shoe untied and every thing about you demonstrating a careless desolation; but you are no such man; you are rather point-device in your accoutrements, as loving yourself than seeming the lover of any other.

Orl. Fair youth, I would I could make thee believe I love.

Ros. Me believe it! you may as soon make her that you love believe it; which, I warrant, she is apter to do than to confess she does: that is one of the points in the which women still give the lie to their consciences. But, in good sooth, are you he that hangs the verses on the trees, wherein Rosalind is so admired?

Orl. I swear to thee, youth, by the white hand of Rosalind, I am that he, that unfortunate he.

Ros. But are you so much in love as your rhymes speak?

Orl. Neither rhyme nor reason can express how much.

Ros. Love is merely a madness; and, I tell you, deserves as well a dark house and a whip as madmen do: and the reason why they are not so punished and cured is, that the lunacy is so ordinary that the whippers are in love too. Yet I profess curing it by counsel.

Orl. Did you ever cure any so?

Ros. Yes, one, and in this manner. He was to imagine me his love, his mistress; and I set him every day to woo me: at which time would I, being but a moonish youth, grieve, be effeminate, changeable, longing and liking; proud, fantastical, apish, shallow, inconstant, full of tears, full of smiles; for every passion something and for no passion truly any thing, as boys and women are for the most part cattle of this colour: would now like him, now loathe him; then entertain him, then forswear him; now weep for him, then spit at him; that I drave my suitor from his mad humour of love to a living humour of madness; which was, to forswear the full stream of the world and to live in a nook merely monastic. And thus I cured him; and this way will I take upon me to wash your liver as clean as a sound sheep's heart, that there shall not be one spot of love in 't.

Orl. I would not be cured, youth.

Ros. I would cure you, if you would but call me Rosalind and come every day to my cote and woo me.

Orl. Now, by the faith of my love, I will: tell me where it is.

Ros. Go with me to it and I'll show it you: and by the way you shall tell me where in the forest you live. Will you go?

Orl. With all my heart, good youth.

Ros. Nay, you must call me Rosalind. Come, sister, will you go?

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III

The forest.

Enter TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY; JAUQUES behind.

Touch. Come apace, good Audrey: I will fetch up your goats, Audrey. And how, Audrey? am I the man yet? doth my simple feature content you?

Aud. Your features! Lord warrant us! what features?

Touch. I am here with thee and thy goats, as the most capricious poet, honest Ovid, was among the Goths.

- Jaqu.* [*aside.*] O knowledge ill-inhabited, worse than Jove in a thatched house!
- Touch.* When a man's verses cannot be understood, nor a man's good wit seconded with the forward child, understanding, it strikes a man more dead than a great reckoning in a little room. Truly, I would the gods had made thee poetical.
- Aud.* I do not know what "poetical" is; is it honest in deed and word? is it a true thing?
- Touch.* No, truly; for the truest poetry is the most feigning; and lovers are given to poetry, and what they swear in poetry may be said as lovers they do feign.
- Aud.* Do you wish then that the gods had made me poetical?
- Touch.* I do, truly; for thou swearest to me thou art honest: now, if thou wert a poet, I might have some hope thou didst feign.
- Aud.* Would you not have me honest?
- Touch.* No, truly, unless thou wert hard-favoured; for honesty coupled with beauty is to have honey a sauce to sugar.
- Jaqu.* [*aside.*] A material fool!
- Aud.* Well, I am not fair; and therefore I pray the gods make me honest.
- Touch.* Truly, and to cast away honesty upon a foul slut were to put good meat into an unclean dish.
- Aud.* I am not a slut, though I thank the gods I am foul.
- Touch.* Well, praised be the gods for thy foulness! sluttishness may come hereafter. But be it as it may be, I will marry thee, and to that end I have been with Sir Oliver Martext the vicar of the next village, who hath promised to meet me in this place of the forest and to couple us.
- Jaqu.* [*aside.*] I would fain see this meeting.
- Aud.* Well, the gods give us joy!
- Touch.* Amen. A man may, if he were of a fearful heart, stagger in this attempt; for here we have no temple but the wood, no assembly but horn-beasts. But what though? Courage! As horns are odious, they are necessary. It is said, "many a man knows no end of his goods:" right; many a man has good horns, and knows no end of them. Well, that is the dowry of his wife; 'tis none of his own getting. Horns?—even so:—poor men alone? No, no; the noblest deer hath them as huge as the rascal. Is the single man therefore blessed? No: as a walled town is more worthier than a village, so is the forehead of a married man more honour-

able than the bare brow of a bachelor; and by how much defence is better than no skill, by so much is a horn more precious than to want. Here comes Sir Oliver.

Enter SIR OLIVER MARTEXT.

Sir Oliver Martext, you are well met: will you dispatch us here under this tree, or shall we go with you to your chapel?

Sir Oli. Is there none here to give the woman?

Touch. I will not take her on gift of any man.

Sir Oli. Truly, she must be given, or the marriage is not lawful.

Jaq. Proceed, proceed: I'll give her.

Touch. Good even, good Master What-ye-call 't: how do you, sir? You are very well met: God 'ild you for your last company: I am very glad to see you: even a toy in hand here, sir: nay, pray be covered.

Jaq. Will you be married, motley?

Touch. As the ox hath his bow, sir, the horse his curb and the falcon her bells, so man hath his desires; and as pigeons bill, so wedlock would be nibbling.

Jaq. And will you, being a man of your breeding, be married under a bush like a beggar? Get you to church, and have a good priest that can tell you what marriage is: this fellow will but join you together as they join wainscot; then one of you will prove a shrunk panel, and like green timber warp, warp.

Touch. [*aside.*] I am not in the mind but I were better to be married of him than of another: for he is not like to marry me well; and not being well married, it will be a good excuse for me hereafter to leave my wife.

Jaq. Go thou with me, and let me counsel thee.

Touch. Come, sweet Audrey:

We must be married, or we must live in bawdry.

Farewell, good Master Oliver: not,—

O sweet Oliver,

O brave Oliver,

Leave me not behind thee:

but,—

Wind away,

Begone, I say,

I will not to wedding with thee.

[*Exeunt JAKES, TOUCHSTONE, and AUDREY.*

Sir Oli. 'Tis no matter: ne'er a fantastical knave of them all shall flout me out of my calling. [Exit.]

SCENE IV.

The forest.

Enter ROSALIND and CELIA.

- Ros.* Never talk to me; I will weep.
Cel. Do, I prithee; but yet have the grace to consider that tears do not become a man.
Ros. But have I not cause to weep?
Cel. As good cause as one would desire; therefore weep.
Ros. His very hair is of the dissembling colour.
Cel. Something browner than Judas's: marry, his kisses are Judas's own children.
Ros. I' faith, his hair is of a good colour.
Cel. An excellent colour: your chestnut was ever the only colour.
Ros. And his kissing is as full of sanctity as the touch of holy bread.
Cel. He hath bought a pair of cast lips of Diana: a nun of winter's sisterhood kisses not more religiously; the very ice of chastity is in them.
Ros. But why did he swear he would come this morning, and comes not?
Cel. Nay, certainly, there is no truth in him.
Ros. Do you think so?
Cel. Yes; I think he is not a pick-purse nor a horse-stealer; but for his verity in love, I do think him as concave as a covered goblet or worm-eaten nut.
Ros. Not true in love?
Cel. Yes, when he is in; but I think he is not in.
Ros. You have heard him swear downright he was.
Cel. "Was" is not "is": besides, the oath of a lover is no stronger than the word of a tapster; they are both the confirmer of false reckonings. He attends here in the forest on the Duke your father.
Ros. I met the Duke yesterday and had much question with him: he asked me of what parentage I was; I told him, of as good as he; so he laughed and let me go. But what talk we of fathers, when there is such a man as Orlando?

Cel. O, that's a brave man! he writes brave verses, speaks brave words, swears brave oaths and breaks them bravely, quite traverse, athwart the heart of his lover; as a puisny tilter, that spurs his horse but on one side, breaks his staff like a noble goose: but all's brave that youth mounts and folly guides. Who comes here?

Enter CORIN.

Cor. Mistress and master, you have oft inquired
After the shepherd that complain'd of love,
Who you saw sitting by me on the turf,
Praising the proud disdainful shepherdess
That was his mistress.

Cel. Well, and what of him?

Cor. If you will see a pageant truly play'd,
Between the pale complexion of true love
And the red glow of scorn and proud disdain,
Go hence a little and I shall conduct you,
If you will mark it.

Ros. O, come, let us remove:

The sight of lovers feedeth those in love.

Bring us to this sight, and you shall say

I'll prove a busy actor in their play.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE V.

Another part of the forest.

Enter SILVIUS and PHEBE.

Sil. Sweet Phebe, do not scorn me; do not, Phebe;
Say that you love me not, but say not so
In bitterness. The common executioner,
Whose heart the accustom'd sight of death makes hard,
Falls not the axe upon the humbled neck
But first begs pardon: will you sterner be
Than he that dies and lives by bloody drops?

Enter ROSALIND, CELIA, and CORIN, behind.

Phe. I would not be thy executioner:
I fly thee, for I would not injure thee.
Thou tell'st me there is murder in mine eye:
'Tis pretty, sure, and very probable,
That eyes, that are the frail'st and softest things,
Who shut their coward gates on atomies,
Should be call'd tyrants, butchers, murderers!

Now I do frown on thee with all my heart;
 And if mine eyes can wound, now let them kill thee:
 Now counterfeit to swoon; why now fall down;
 Or if thou canst not, O, for shame, for shame,
 Lie not, to say mine eyes are murderers!
 Now show the wound mine eye hath made in thee:
 Scratch thee but with a pin, and there remains
 Some scar of it; lean but upon a rush,
 The cicatrice and capable impressure
 Thy palm some moment keeps; but now mine eyes,
 Which I have darted at thee, hurt thee not,
 Nor, I am sure, there is no force in eyes
 That can do hurt.

Sil.

O dear Phebe,
 If ever,—as that ever may be near,—
 You meet in some fresh cheek the power of fancy,
 Then shall you know the wounds invisible
 That love's keen arrows make.

Phe.

But till that time
 Come not thou near me: and when that time comes,
 Afflict me with thy mocks, pity me not;
 As till that time I shall not pity thee.

Ros.

And why, I pray you? Who might be your mother,
 That you insult, exult, and all at once,
 Over the wretched? What though you have no beauty,—
 As, by my faith, I see no more in you
 Than without candle may go dark to bed,—
 Must you be therefore proud and pitiless?
 Why, what means this? Why do you look on me?
 I see no more in you than in the ordinary
 Of nature's sale-work. 'Od's my little life,
 I think she means to tangle my eyes too!
 No, faith, proud mistress, hope not after it:
 'Tis not your inky brows, your black silk hair,
 Your bugle eyeballs, nor your cheek of cream,
 That can entame my spirits to your worship.
 You foolish shepherd, wherefore do you follow her,
 Like foggy south, puffing wind and rain?
 You are a thousand times a properer man
 Than she a woman: 'tis such fools as you
 That makes the world full of ill-favour'd children:
 'Tis not her glass, but you, that flatters her;
 And out of you she sees herself more proper

Than any of her lineaments can show her.
 But, mistress, know yourself; down on your knees,
 And thank heaven, fasting, for a good man's love:
 For I must tell you friendly in your ear,
 Sell when you can; you are not for all markets:
 Cry the man mercy; love him; take his offer:
 Foul is most foul, being foul to be a scoffer.
 So take her to thee, shepherd: fare you well.

Phe. Sweet youth, I pray you, chide a year together:

I had rather hear you chide than this man woo.

Ros. He's fallen in love with your foulness and she'll fall in
 love with my anger. If it be so, as fast as she answers
 thee with frowning looks, I'll sauce her with bitter words.
 Why look you so upon me?

Phe. For no ill will I bear you.

Ros. I pray you, do not fall in love with me,
 For I am falser than vows made in wine:
 Besides, I like you not. If you will know my house,
 'Tis at the tuft of olives here hard by.
 Will you go, sister? Shepherd, ply her hard.
 Come, sister. Shepherdess, look on him better,
 And be not proud: though all the world could see,
 None could be so abused in sight as he.
 Come, to our flock.

[*Exeunt ROSALIND, CELIA and CORIN.*]

Phe. Dead shepherd, now I find thy saw of might,
 'Who ever loved that loved not at first sight?'

Sil. Sweet Phebe,—

Phe. Ha, what say'st thou, Silvius?

Sil. Sweet Phebe, pity me.

Phe. Why, I am sorry for thee, gentle Silvius.

Sil. Wherever sorrow is, relief would be:
 If you do sorrow at my grief in love,
 By giving love your sorrow and my grief
 Were both extermin'd.

Phe. Thou hast my love: is not that neighbourly?

Sil. I would have you.

Phe. Why, that were covetousness.

Silvius, the time was that I hated thee,
 And yet it is not that I bear thee love;
 But since that thou canst talk of love so well,
 Thy company, which erst was irksome to me,

I will endure, and I'll employ thee too:
But do not look for further recompense
Than thine own gladness that thou art employ'd.

Sil. So holy and so perfect is my love,
And I in such a poverty of grace,
That I shall think it a most plenteous crop
To glean the broken ears after the man
That the main harvest reaps: loose now and then
A scatter'd smile, and that I'll live upon.

Phe. Know'st thou the youth that spoke to me erewhile?

Sil. Not very well, but I have met him oft;
And he hath bought the cottage and the bounds
That the old carlot once was master of.

Phe. Think not I love him, though I ask for him;
'Tis but a peevish boy; yet he talks well;
But what care I for words? yet words do well
When he that speaks them pleases those that hear.
It is a pretty youth: not very pretty:
But, sure, he's proud, and yet his pride becomes him:
He'll make a proper man: the best thing in him
Is his complexion; and faster than his tongue
Did make offence his eye did heal it up.
He is not very tall; yet for his years he's tall:
His leg is but so; and yet 'tis well:
There was a pretty redness in his lip,
A little riper and more lusty red
Than that mix'd in his cheek; 'twas just the difference
Betwixt the constant red and mingled damask.
There be some women, Silvius, had they mark'd him
In parcels as I did, would have gone near
To fall in love with him: but, for my part,
I love him not nor hate him not; and yet
I have more cause to hate him than to love him:
For what had he to do to chide at me?
He said mine eyes were black and my hair black;
And, now I am remember'd, scorn'd at me:
I marvel why I answer'd not again:
But that's all one; omittance is no quittance.
I'll write to him a very taunting letter,
And thou shalt bear it: wilt thou, Silvius?

Sil. Phebe, with all my heart.

Phe. I'll write it straight;
The matter's in my head and in my heart:

I will be bitter with him and passing short.
Go with me, Silvius.

[*Exeunt.*]

ACT FOURTH.

SCENE I.

The forest.

Enter ROSALIND, CELIA, and JAQUES.

Jaq. I prithee, pretty youth, let me be better acquainted with thee.

Ros. They say you are a melancholy fellow.

Jaq. I am so; I do love it better than laughing.

Ros. Those that are in extremity of either are abominable fellows, and betray themselves to every modern censure worse than drunkards.

Jaq. Why, 'tis good to be sad and say nothing.

Ros. Why then, 'tis good to be a post.

Jaq. I have neither the scholar's melancholy, which is emulation; nor the musician's, which is fantastical; nor the courtier's, which is proud; nor the soldier's, which is ambitious; nor the lawyer's, which is politic; nor the lady's which is nice; nor the lover's, which is all these: but it is a melancholy of mine own, compounded of many simples, extracted from many objects; and indeed the sundry contemplation of my travels, in which my often rumination wraps me in a most humorous sadness.

Ros. A traveller! By my faith, you have great reason to be sad; I fear you have sold your own lands to see other men's; then, to have seen much, and to have nothing, is to have rich eyes and poor hands.

Jaq. Yes, I have gained my experience.

Ros. And your experience makes you sad: I had rather have a fool to make me merry than experience to make me sad; and to travel for it too!

Enter ORLANDO.

Orl. Good-day and happiness, dear Rosalind!

Jaq. Nay, then, God buy you, an you talk in blank verse.

[*Exit.*]

Ros. Farewell, Monsieur Traveller: look you lisp and wear strange suits; disable all the benefits of your own country;

be out of love with your nativity and almost chide God for making you that countenance you are; or I will scarce think you have swam in a gondola. Why, how now, Orlando! where have you been all this while? You a lover! An you serve me such another trick, never come in my sight more.

Orl. My fair Rosalind, I come within an hour of my promise.

Ros. Break an hour's promise in love! He that will divide a minute into a thousand parts, and break but a part of the thousandth part of a minute in the affairs of love, it may be said of him that Cupid hath clapped him o' the shoulder, but I'll warrant him heart-whole.

Orl. Pardon me, dear Rosalind.

Ros. Nay, an you be so tardy, come no more in my sight: I had as lief be wooed of a snail.

Orl. Of a snail?

Ros. Ay, of a snail; for though he comes slowly, he carries his house on his head; a better jointure, I think, than you make a woman: besides, he brings his destiny with him.

Orl. What's that?

Ros. Why, horns, which such as you are fain to be beholding to your wives for: but he comes armed in his fortune and prevents the slander of his wife.

Orl. Virtue is no horn-maker; and my Rosalind is virtuous.

Ros. And I am your Rosalind.

Cel. It pleases him to call you so; but he hath a Rosalind of a better leer than you.

Ros. Come, woo me, woo me; for now I am in a holiday humour and like enough to consent. What would you say to me now, an I were your very very Rosalind?

Orl. I would kiss before I spoke.

Ros. Nay, you were better speak first; and when you were gravelled for lack of matter, you might take occasion to kiss. Very good orators, when they are out, they will spit; and for lovers lacking—God warn us!—matter, the cleanliest shift is to kiss.

Orl. How if the kiss be denied?

Ros. Then she puts you to entreaty and there begins new matter.

Orl. Who could be out, being before his beloved mistress?

Ros. Marry, that should you, if I were your mistress, or I should think my honesty ranker than my wit.

Orl. What of my suit?

Ros. Not out of your apparel, and yet out of your suit. Am not I your Rosalind?

Orl. I take some joy to say you are, because I would be talking of her.

Ros. Well, in her person, I say I will not have you.

Orl. Then in mine own person I die.

Ros. No, faith, die by attorney. The poor world is almost six thousand years old, and in all this time there was not any man died in his own person, videlicet, in a love-cause. Troilus had his brains dashed out with a Grecian club; yet he did what he could to die before, and he is one of the patterns of love. Leander, he would have lived many a fair year, though Hero had turned nun, if it had not been for a hot midsummer night; for, good youth, he went but forth to wash him in the Hellespont and being taken with the cramp was drowned: and the foolish chroniclers of that age found it was "Hero of Sestos." But these are all lies: men have died from time to time and worms have eaten them, but not for love.

Orl. I would not have my right Rosalind of this mind; for, I protest, her frown might kill me.

Ros. By this hand, it will not kill a fly. But come, now I will be your Rosalind in a more coming-on disposition, and ask me what you will, I will grant it.

Orl. Then love me, Rosalind.

Ros. Yes, faith, will I, Fridays and Saturdays and all.

Orl. And wilt thou have me?

Ros. Ay, and twenty such.

Orl. What sayest thou?

Ros. Are you not good?

Orl. I hope so.

Ros. Why then, can one desire too much of a good thing? Come, sister, you shall be the priest and marry us. Give me your hand, Orlando. What do you say, sister?

Orl. Pray thee, marry us.

Cel. I cannot say the words.

Ros. You must begin, "Will you, Orlando—"

Cel. Go to. Will you, Orlando, have to wife this Rosalind?

Orl. I will.

Ros. Ay, but when?

Orl. Why now; as fast as she can marry us.

Ros. Then you must say, "I take thee, Rosalind, for wife."

Orl. I take thee, Rosalind, for wife.

- Ros.* I might ask you for your commission; but I do take thee, Orlando, for my husband: there's a girl goes before the priest; and certainly a woman's thought runs before her actions.
- Orl.* So do all thoughts; they are winged.
- Ros.* Now tell me how long you would have her after you have possessed her.
- Orl.* For ever and a day.
- Ros.* Say "a day," without the "ever." No, no, Orlando; men are April when they woo, December when they wed: maids are May when they are maids, but the sky changes when they are wives. I will be more jealous of thee than a Barbary cock-pigeon over his hen, more clamorous than a parrot against rain, more new-fangled than an ape, more giddy in my desires than a monkey: I will weep for nothing, like Diana in the fountain, and I will do that when you are disposed to be merry; I will laugh like a hyen, and that when thou art inclined to sleep.
- Orl.* But will my Rosalind do so?
- Ros.* By my life, she will do as I do.
- Orl.* O, but she is wise.
- Ros.* Or else she could not have the wit to do this: the wiser, the waywarder: make the doors upon a woman's wit and it will out at the casement; shut that and 'twill out at the key-hole; stop that, 'twill fly with the smoke out at the chimney.
- Orl.* A man that had a wife with such a wit, he might say, "Wit, whither wilt?"
- Ros.* Nay, you might keep that check for it till you met your wife's wit going to your neighbour's bed.
- Orl.* And what wit could wit have to excuse that?
- Ros.* Marry, to say she came to seek you there. You shall never take her without her answer, unless you take her without her tongue. O, that woman that cannot make her fault her husband's occasion, let her never nurse her child herself, for she will breed it like a fool!
- Orl.* For these two hours, Rosalind, I will leave thee.
- Ros.* Alas, dear love, I cannot lack thee two hours!
- Orl.* I must attend the Duke at dinner: by two o'clock I will be with thee again.
- Ros.* Ay, go your ways, go your ways; I knew what you would prove: my friends told me as much, and I thought no

less: that flattering tongue of yours won me: 'tis but one cast away, and so, come, death! Two o'clock is your hour? Ay, sweet Rosalind.

Orl.

Ros. By my troth, and in good earnest, and so God mend me, and by all pretty oaths that are not dangerous, if you break one jot of your promise or come one minute behind your hour, I will think you the most pathological break-promise, and the most hollow lover, and the most unworthy of her you call Rosalind, that may be chosen out of the gross band of the unfaithful: therefore beware my censure and keep your promise.

Orl.

With no less religion than if thou wert indeed my Rosalind: so adieu.

Ros.

Well, Time is the old justice that examines all such offenders, and let Time try: adieu. [*Exeunt ORLANDO.*]

Cel.

You have simply misused our sex in your love-prate: we must have your doublet and hose plucked over your head, and show the world what the bird hath done to her own nest.

Ros.

O coz, coz, coz, my pretty little coz, that thou didst know how many fathom deep I am in love! But it cannot be sounded: my affection hath an unknown bottom, like the bay of Portugal.

Cel.

Or rather, bottomless; that as fast as you pour affection in, it runs out.

Ros.

No, that same wicked bastard of Venus that was begot of thought, conceived of spleen, and born of madness, that blind rascally boy that abuses every one's eyes because his own are out, let him be judge how deep I am in love. I'll tell thee, Aliena, I cannot be out of the sight of Orlando: I'll go find a shadow and sigh till he come.

Cel.

And I'll sleep. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II

The forest.

Enter JAQUES, LORDS and FORESTERS.

Jaq.

Which is he that killed the deer?

A Lord.

Sir, it was I.

Jaq.

Let's present him to the Duke, like a Roman conqueror; and it would do well to set the deer's horns upon his head, for a branch of victory. Have you no song, forester, for this purpose?

For. Yes, sir.
Jaq. Sing it: 'tis no matter how it be in tune, so it make noise enough.

SONG.

For. What shall he have that kill'd the deer?
 His leather skin and horns to wear.
 Then sing him home:

[The rest shall bear this burden.]

Take thou no scorn to wear the horn;
 It was a crest ere thou wast born:

Thy father's father wore it,

And thy father bore it:

The horn, the horn, the lusty horn
 Is not a thing to laugh to scorn.

[Exeunt.]

SCENE III.

The forest.

Enter ROSALIND and CELIA.

Ros. How say you now? Is it not past two o'clock? and here much Orlando!

Cel. I warrant you, with pure love and troubled brain, he hath ta'en his bow and arrows and is gone forth to sleep. Look, who comes here?

Enter SILVIUS.

Sil. My errand is to you, fair youth;
 My gentle Phebe bid me give you this:
 I know not the contents; but, as I guess
 By the stern brow and waspish action
 Which she did use as she was writing of it,
 It bears an angry tenour: pardon me;
 I am but as a guiltless messenger.

Ros. Patience herself would startle at this letter
 And play the swaggerer; bear this, bear all:
 She says I am not fair, that I lack manners;
 She calls me proud, and that she could not love me,
 Were man as rare as phoenix. 'Od's my will!
 Her love is not the hare that I do hunt:
 Why writes she so to me? Well, shepherd, well,
 This is a letter of your own device.



THE MEMORIAL THEATER, STRATFORD-ON-AVON
Destroyed by fire in 1926



STRATFORD-ON-AVON
Shakespeare is buried in the church here visible

- Sil.* No, I protest, I know not the contents:
Phoebe did write it.
- Ros.* Come, come, you are a fool,
And turn'd into the extremity of love.
I saw her hand: she has a leathern hand,
A freestone-colour'd hand; I verily did think
That her old gloves were on, but 'twas her hands:
She has a huswife's hand; but that's no matter:
I say she never did invent this letter;
This is a man's invention and his hand.
- Sil.* Sure, it is hers.
- Ros.* Why, 'tis a boisterous and cruel style,
A style for challengers; why, she defies me,
Like Turk to Christian: woman's gentle brain
Could not drop forth such giant-rude invention,
Such Ethiopie words, blacker in their effect
Than in their countenance. Will you hear this letter?
- Sil.* So please you, for I never heard it yet;
Yet heard too much of Phebe's cruelty.
- Ros.* She Phebes me: mark how the tyrant writes.
[reads] Art thou god to shepherd turn'd,
That a maiden's heart hath burn'd?
Can a woman rail thus?
- Sil.* Call you this railing?
- Ros.* [reads]
Why, thy godhead laid apart,
Warr'st thou with a woman's heart?
Did you ever hear such railing?
Whiles the eye of man did woo me,
That could do no vengeance to me.
Meaning me a beast.
If the scorn of your bright eyne
Have power to raise such love in mine,
Alack, in me what strange effect
Would they work in mild aspect!
Whiles you chide me, I did love;
How then might your prayers move!
He that brings this love to thee
Little knows this love in me:
And by him seal up thy mind;
Whether that thy youth and kind
Will the faithful offer take
Of me and all that I can make;

Or else by him my love deny,
And then I'll study how to die.

Sil. Call you this chiding?

Cel. Alas, poor shepherd!

Ros. Do you pity him? no, he deserves no pity. Wilt thou love such a woman? What, to make thee an instrument and play false strains upon thee! not to be endured! Well, go your way to her, for I see love hath made thee a tame snake, and say this to her: that if she love me, I charge her to love thee; if she will not, I will never have her unless thou entreat for her. If you be a true lover, hence, and not a word; for here comes more company.

[*Exit SILVIUS.*]

Enter OLIVER.

Oli. Good morrow, fair ones; pray you, if you know,
Where in the purlieus of this forest stands
A sheep-cote fenced about with olive-trees?

Cel. West of this place, down in the neighbour bottom:
The rank of osiers by the murmuring stream
Left on your right hand brings you to the place.
But at this hour the house doth keep itself;
There's none within.

Oli. If that an eye may profit by a tongue,
Then should I know you by description;
Such garments and such years: "The boy is fair,
Of female favour, and bestows himself
Like a ripe sister: the woman low,
And browner than her brother." Are not you
The owner of the house I did enquire for?

Cel. It is no boast, being ask'd, to say we are.

Oli. Orlando doth commend him to you both,
And to that youth he calls his Rosalind
He sends this bloody napkin. Are you he?

Ros. I am: what must we understand by this?

Oli. Some of my shame; if you will know of me
What man I am, and how, and why, and where
This handkercher was stain'd.

Cel. I pray you, tell it.

Oli. When last the young Orlando parted from you
He left a promise to return again
Within an hour, and pacing through the forest,
Chewing the food of sweet and bitter fancy,

Lo, what befel! he threw his eye aside,
 And mark what object did present itself:
 Under an oak, whose boughs were moss'd with age
 And high top bald with dry antiquity,
 A wretched ragged man, o'ergrown with hair,
 Lay sleeping on his back: about his neck
 A green and gilded snake had wreathed itself,
 Who with her head nimble in threats approach'd
 The opening of his mouth; but suddenly,
 Seeing Orlando, it unlink itself,
 And with indented glides did slip away
 Into a bush: under which bush's shade
 A lioness, with udders all drawn dry,
 Lay couching, head on ground, with catlike watch,
 When that the sleeping man should stir; for 'tis
 The royal disposition of that beast
 To prey on nothing that doth seem as dead;
 This seen, Orlando did approach the man
 And found it was his brother, his elder brother.

Cel. O, I have heard him speak of that same brother;
 And he did render him the most unnatural
 That lived amongst men.

Oli. And well he might so do,
 For well I know he was unnatural.

Ros. But, to Orlando: did he leave him there,
 Food to the suck'd and hungry lioness?

Oli. Twice did he turn his back and purposed so;
 But kindness, nobler ever than revenge,
 And nature, stronger than his just occasion,
 Made him give battle to the lioness,
 Who quickly fell before him: in which hurtling
 From miserable slumber I awaked.

Cel. Are you his brother?

Ros. Was't you he rescued?

Cel. Was't you that did so often contrive to kill him?

Oli. 'Twas I: but 'tis not I: I do not shame
 To tell you what I was, since my conversion
 So sweetly tastes, being the thing I am.

Ros. But, for the bloody napkin?

Oli. By and by.

When from the first to last betwixt us two
 Tears our recountments had most kindly bathed,
 As how I came into that desert place;

In brief, he led me to the gentle Duke,
 Who gave me fresh array and entertainment,
 Committing me unto my brother's love;
 Who led me instantly unto his cave,
 There stripp'd himself, and here upon his arm
 The lioness had torn some flesh away,
 Which all this while had bled; and now he fainted
 And cried, in fainting, upon Rosalind.
 Brief, I recover'd him, bound up his wound;
 And, after some small space, being strong at heart,
 He sent me hither, stranger as I am,
 To tell this story, that you might excuse
 His broken promise, and to give this napkin,
 Dyed in his blood, unto the shepherd youth
 That he in sport doth call his Rosalind.

[ROSALIND swoons.

- Cel.* Why, how now, Ganymede! sweet Ganymede!
Oli. Many will swoon when they do look on blood.
Cel. There is more in it. Cousin Ganymede!
Oli. Look, he recovers.
Ros. I would I were at home.
Cel. We'll lead you thither.
 I pray you, will you take him by the arm?
Oli. Be of good cheer, youth: you a man! you lack a man's heart.
Ros. I do so, I confess it. Ah, sirrah, a body would think this was well counterfeited! I pray you, tell your brother how well I counterfeited. Heigh-ho!
Oli. This was not counterfeited: there is too great testimony in your complexion that it was a passion of earnest.
Ros. Counterfeit, I assure you.
Oli. Well then, take a good heart and counterfeit to be a man.
Ros. So I do: but i' faith, I should have been a woman by right.
Cel. Come, you look paler and paler: pray you, draw home-wards. Good sir, go with us.
Oli. That will I, for I must bear answer back
 How you excuse my brother, Rosalind.
Ros. I shall devise something: but, I pray you, commend my counterfeiting to him. Will you go?

[*Exeunt.*

ACT FIFTH.

SCENE I.

*The forest.**Enter TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY.*

Touch. We shall find a time, Audrey; patience, gentle Audrey.

Aud. Faith, the priest was good enough, for all the old gentleman's saying.

Touch. A most wicked Sir Oliver, Audrey, a most vile Martext. But, Audrey, there is a youth here in the forest lays claim to you.

Aud. Ay, I know who 'tis: he hath no interest in me in the world: here comes the man you mean.

Touch. It is meat and drink to me to see a clown: by my troth, we that have good wits have much to answer for; we shall be flouting; we cannot hold.

Enter WILLIAM.

Will. Good even, Audrey.

Aud. God, ye good even, William.

Will. And good even to you, sir.

Touch. Good even, gentle friend. Cover thy head, cover thy head; nay, prithee, be covered. How old are you, friend?

Will. Five and twenty, sir.

Touch. A ripe age. Is thy name William?

Will. William, sir.

Touch. A fair name. Wast born i' the forest here?

Will. Ay, sir, I thank God.

Touch. "Thank God;" a good answer. Art rich?

Will. Faith, sir, so so.

Touch. "So so" is good, very good, very excellent good; and yet it is not; it is but so so. Art thou wise?

Will. Ay, sir, I have a pretty wit.

Touch. Why, thou sayest well. I do now remember a saying, "The fool doth think he is wise, but the wise man knows himself to be a fool." The heathen philosopher, when he had a desire to eat a grape, would open his lips when he put it into his mouth; meaning thereby that grapes were made to eat and lips to open. You do love this maid?

Will. I do, sir.

Touch. Give me your hand. Art thou learned?

Will. No, sir.

Touch. Then learn this of me: to have, is to have; for it is a figure in rhetoric that drink, being poured out of a cup into a glass, by filling the one doth empty the other; for all your writers do consent that ipse is he: now, you are not ipse, for I am he.

Will. Which he, sir?

Touch. He, sir, that must marry this woman. Therefore, you clown, abandon,—which is in the vulgar leave,—the society,—which in the boorish is company,—of this female,—which in the common is woman; which together is, abandon the society of this female, or clown, thou perishest; or, to thy better understanding, diest; or, to wit, I kill thee, make thee away, translate thy life into death, thy liberty into bondage: I will deal in poison with thee, or in bastinado, or in steel; I will bandy with thee in faction; I will o'er-run thee with policy; I will kill thee a hundred and fifty ways: therefore tremble, and depart.

Aud. Do, good William.

Will. God rest you merry, sir.

[*Exit.*]

Enter CORWIN.

Cor. Our master and mistress seeks you; come, away, away!

Touch. Trip, Audrey! trip, Audrey! I attend, I attend.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

The forest.

Enter ORLANDO and OLIVER.

Orl. Is't possible that on so little acquaintance you should like her? that but seeing you should love her? and loving woo? and, wooing, she should grant? and will you persevere to enjoy her?

Oli. Neither call the giddiness of it in question, the poverty of her, the small acquaintance, my sudden wooing, nor her sudden consenting; but say with me, I love Aliena; say with her that she loves me; consent with both that we may enjoy each other: it shall be to your good; for my father's house and all the revenue that was old Sir Rowland's will I estate upon you, and here live and die a shepherd.

Orl. You have my consent. Let your wedding be to-morrow: thither will I invite the Duke and all's contented followers. Go you and prepare Aliena; for look you, here comes my Rosalind.

Enter ROSALIND.

Ros. God save you, brother.

Oli. And you, fair sister.

Ros. O, my dear Orlando, how it grieves me to see thee wear thy heart in a scarf!

Orl. It is my arm.

Ros. I thought thy heart had been wounded with the claws of a lion.

Orl. Wounded it is, but with the eyes of a lady.

Ros. Did your brother tell you how I counterfeited to swoon when he showed me your handkercher?

Orl. Ay, and greater wonders than that.

Ros. O, I know where you are: nay, 'tis true: there was never any thing so sudden but the fight of two rams, and Cæsar's thrasonical brag of "I came, saw, and overcame:" for your brother and my sister no sooner met but they looked; no sooner looked but they loved; no sooner loved but they sighed; no sooner sighed but they asked one another the reason; no sooner knew the reason but they sought the remedy: and in these degrees have they made a pair of stairs to marriage which they will climb incontinent, or else be incontinent before marriage: they are in the very wrath of love and they will together; clubs cannot part them.

Orl. They shall be married to-morrow, and I will bid the Duke to the nuptial. But, O, how bitter a thing it is to look into happiness through another man's eyes! By so much the more shall I to-morrow be at the height of heart-heaviness, by how much I shall think my brother happy in having what he wishes for.

Ros. Why then, to-morrow I cannot serve your turn for Rosalind?

Orl. I can live no longer by thinking.

Ros. I will weary you then no longer with idle talking. Know of me then, for now I speak to some purpose, that I know you are a gentleman of good conceit: I speak not this that you should bear a good opinion of my knowledge, in-so much I say I know you are; neither do I labour for a greater esteem than may in some little measure draw a

belief from you, to do yourself good and not to grace me. Believe then, if you please, that I can do strange things: I have, since I was three years old, conversed with a magician, most profound in his art and yet not damnable. If you do love Rosalind so near the heart as your gesture cries it out, when your brother marries Aliena, shall you marry her: I know into what straits of fortune she is driven; and it is not impossible to me, if it appear not inconvenient to you, to set her before your eyes to-morrow human as she is and without any danger.

Orl. Speakest thou in sober meanings?

Ros. By my life, I do; which I tender dearly, though I say I am a magician. Therefore, put you in your best array; bid your friends; for if you will be married to-morrow, you shall; and to Rosalind, if you will.

Enter SILVIUS and PHEBE.

Look, here comes a lover of mine and a lover of hers.

Phe. Youth, you have done me much ungentleness,
To show the letter that I writ to you.

Ros. I care not if I have: it is my study.
To seem despiteful and ungentle to you:

You are there followed by a faithful shepherd;
Look upon him, love him; he worships you.

Phe. Good shepherd, tell this youth what 'tis to love.

Sil. It is to be all made of sighs and tears;

And so am I for Phebe.

Phe. And I for Ganymede.

Orl. And I for Rosalind.

Ros. And I for no woman.

Sil. It is to be all made of faith and service;
And so am I for Phebe.

Phe. And I for Ganymede.

Orl. And I for Rosalind.

Ros. And I for no woman.

Sil. It is to be made of fantasy,
All made of passion, and all made of wishes;
All adoration, duty, and observance,
All humbleness, all patience, and impatience,
All purity, all trial, all observance;
And so am I for Phebe.

Phe. And so am I for Ganymede.

Orl. And so am I for Rosalind.

- Ros.* And so am I for no woman.
Phe. If this be so, why blame you me to love you?
Sil. If this be so, why blame you me to love you?
Orl. If this be so, why blame you me to love you?
Ros. Who do you speak to, "Why blame you me to love you?"
Orl. To her that is not here, nor doth not hear.
Ros. Pray you, no more of this; 'tis like the howling of Irish wolves against the moon. [*To Sil.*] I will help you, if I can: [*To Phe.*] I would love you, if I could. To-morrow meet me all together. [*To Phe.*] I will marry you, if ever I marry woman, and I'll be married to-morrow: [*To Orl.*] I will satisfy you, if ever I satisfied man, and you shall be married to-morrow: [*To Sil.*] I will content you, if what pleases you contents you, and you shall be married to-morrow. [*To Orl.*] As you love Rosalind, meet: [*To Sil.*] as you love Phebe, meet: and as I love no woman, I'll meet. So, fare you well: I have left you commands.
Sil. I'll not fail, if I live.
Phe. Nor I.
Orl. Nor I.

[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.

The forest.

Enter TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY.

- Touch.* To-morrow is the joyful day, Audrey; to-morrow will we be married.
Aud. I do desire it with all my heart; and I hope it is no dishonest desire to desire to be a woman of the world. Here come two of the banished Duke's pages.

Enter Two PAGES.

- Fst. Pg.* Well met, honest gentleman.
Touch. By my troth, well met. Come, sit, sit, and a song.
Sec. Pg. We are for you: sit i' the middle.
Fst. Pg. Shall we clap into 't roundly, without hawking or spitting or saying we are hoarse, which are the only prologues to a bad voice?
Sec. Pg. I' faith, i' faith; and both in a tune, like two gipsies on a horse.

SONG.

It was a lover and his lass,
 With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
 That o'er the green corn-field did pass
 In the spring time, the only pretty ring time,
 When birds do sing, hey ding a ding, ding:
 Sweet lovers love the spring.

Between the acres of the rye,
 With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
 These pretty country folks would lie,
 In spring time, &c.

This carol they began that hour,
 With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
 How that a life was but a flower
 In spring time, &c.

And therefore take the present time,
 With a hey, and a ho, and a hey nonino,
 For love is crowned with the prime
 In spring time, &c.

Touch. Truly, young gentlemen, though there was no great matter in the ditty, yet the note was very untuneable.

Fst. Pg. You are deceived, sir: we kept time, we lost not our time.

Touch. By my troth, yes; I count it but time lost to hear such a foolish song. God be wi' you; and God mend your voices! Come, Audrey. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE IV.

The forest.

Enter DUKE SENIOR, AMIENS, JAQUES, ORLANDO, OLIVER,
 and CELIA.

Duke S. Dost thou believe, Orlando, that the boy
 Can do all this that he hath promised?

Orl. I sometimes do believe, and sometimes do not;
 As those that fear they hope, and know they fear.

Enter ROSALIND, SILVIUS, and PHEBE.

- Ros.* Patience once more, whiles our compact is urged:
You say, if I bring in your Rosalind,
You will bestow her on Orlando here?
- Duke S.* That would I, had I kingdoms to give with her.
- Ros.* And you say, you will have her, when I bring her.
- Orl.* That would I, were I of all kingdoms king.
- Ros.* You say, you'll marry me, if I be willing?
- Phe.* That will I, should I die the hour after.
- Ros.* But if you do refuse to marry me,
You'll give yourself to this most faithful shepherd?
- Phe.* So is the bargain.
- Ros.* You say, that you'll have Phebe, if she will?
- Sil.* Though to have her and death were both one thing.
- Ros.* I have promised to make all this matter even.
Keep you your word, O Duke, to give your daughter;
You yours, Orlando, to receive his daughter;
Keep your word, Phebe, that you'll marry me,
Or else refusing me, to wed this shepherd:
Keep your word, Silvius, that you'll marry her,
If she refuse me: and from hence I go,
To make these doubts all even.

[*Exeunt ROSALIND and CELIA.*]

- Duke S.* I do remember in this shepherd boy
Some lively touches of my daughter's favour.
- Orl.* My lord, the first time that I ever saw him
Methought he was a brother to your daughter:
But, my good lord, this boy is forest-born,
And hath been tutor'd in the rudiments
Of many desperate studies by his uncle,
Whom he reports to be a great magician,
Obscured in the circle of this forest.

Enter TOUCHSTONE and AUDREY.

- Jaq.* There is, sure, another flood toward, and these couples
are coming to the ark. Here comes a pair of very strange
beasts, which in all tongues are called fools.
- Touch.* Salutation and greeting to you all!
- Jaq.* Good my lord, bid him welcome: this is the motley-
minded gentleman that I have so often met in the forest:
he hath been a courtier, he swears.
- Touch.* If any man doubt that, let him put me to my purgation.
I have trod a measure; I have flattered a lady; I have

been politic with my friend, smooth with mine enemy; I have undone three tailors; I have had four quarrels, and like to have fought one.

Jaq. And how was that ta'en up?

Touch. We met, and found the quarrel was upon the seventh cause.

Jaq. How seventh cause? Good my lord, like this fellow.

Duke S. I like him very well.

Touch. God 'ild you, sir; I desire you of the like. I press in here, sir, amongst the rest of the country copulatives, to swear and to forswear; according as marriage binds and blood breaks: a poor virgin, sir, and ill-favoured thing, sir, but mine own; a poor humour of mine, sir, to take that no man else will: rich honesty dwells like a miser, sir, in a poor house; as your pearl in your foul oyster.

Duke S. By my faith, he is very swift and sententious.

Touch. According to the fool's bolt, sir, and such dulcet diseases.

Jaq. But, for the seventh cause; how did you find the quarrel on the seventh cause?

Touch. Upon a lie seven times removed:—bear your body more seeming, Audrey:—as thus, sir. I did dislike the cut of a certain courtier's beard: he sent me word, if I said his beard was not cut well, he was in the mind it was: this is called the Retort Courteous. If I sent him word again "it was not well cut," he would send me word, he cut it to please himself: this is called the Quip Modest. If again "it was not well cut," he disabled my judgment: this is called the Reply Churlish. If again "it was not well cut," he would answer, I spake not true: this is called the Reproof Valiant. If again "it was not well cut," he would say, I lie: this is called the Countercheck Quarrelsome: and so to the Lie Circumstantial and the Lie Direct.

Jaq. And how oft did you say his beard was not well cut?

Touch. I durst go no further than the Lie Circumstantial, nor he durst not give me the Lie Direct; and so we measured swords and parted.

Jaq. Can you nominate in order now the degrees of the lie?

Touch. O sir, we quarrel in print, by the book; as you have books for good manners: I will name you the degrees. The first, the Retort Courteous; the second Quip Modest; the third, the Reply Churlish; the fourth, the Reproof Valiant; the fifth, the Countercheck Quarrelsome; the sixth, the Lie with Circumstance; the seventh, the Lie Direct.

All these you may avoid but the Lie Direct; and you may avoid that too, with an If. I knew when seven justices could not take up a quarrel, but when the parties were met themselves, one of them thought but of an If, as, "If you said so, then I said so;" and they shook hands and swore brothers. Your If is the only peace-maker; much virtue in If.

Jaq. Is not this a rare fellow, my lord? he's as good at any thing and yet a fool.

Duke S. He uses his folly like a stalking-horse and under the presentation of that he shoots his wit.

Enter HYMEN, ROSALIND, and CELIA.

Still music.

Hym. Then is there mirth in heaven,
When earthly things made even
Atone together.
Good Duke, receive thy daughter:
Hymen from heaven brought her,
Yea, brought her hither,
That thou mightst join her hand with his
Whose heart within his bosom is.

Ros. To you I give myself, for I am yours.
To you I give myself, for I am yours.

Duke S. If there be truth in sight, you are my daughter.

Orl. If there be truth in sight, you are my Rosalind.

Phe. If sight and shape be true,
Why then, my love adieu!

Ros. I'll have no father, if you be not he:
I'll have no husband, if you be not he:
Nor ne'er wed woman, if you be not she.

Hym. Peace, ho! I bar confusion:
'Tis I must make conclusion

Of these most strange events:
Here's eight that must take hands
To join in Hymen's bands,
If truth holds true contents.

You and no cross shall part:
You and you are heart in heart:
You to his love must accord,
Or have a woman to your lord:
You and you are sure together,

As the winter to foul weather.
 Whiles a wedlock-hymn we sing,
 Feed yourselves with questioning;
 That reason wonder may diminish,
 How thus we met, and these things finish.

SONG.

Wedding is great Juno's crown:
 O blessed bond of board and bed!
 'Tis Hymen peoples every town;
 High wedlock then be honoured:
 Honour, high honour and renown,
 To Hymen, god of every town!

Duke S. O my dear niece, welcome thou art to me!
 Even daughter, welcome, in no less degree.

Phe. I will not eat my word, now thou art mine;
 Thy faith my fancy to thee doth combine.

Enter JAQUES DE BOYS.

Jaq.deB. Let me have audience for a word or two:
 I am the second son of old Sir Rowland,
 That bring these tidings to this fair assembly.
 Duke Frederick, hearing how that every day
 Men of great worth resorted to this forest,
 Address'd a mighty power; which were on foot,
 In his own conduct, purposely to take
 His brother here and put him to the sword:
 And to the skirts of this wild wood he came;
 Where meeting with an old religious man,
 After some question with him, was converted
 Both from his enterprise and from the world;
 His crown bequeathing to his banish'd brother,
 And all their lands restored to them again
 That were with him exiled. This to be true,
 I do engage my life.

Duke S. Welcome, young man;
 Thou offer'st fairly to thy brothers' wedding:
 To one his lands withheld; and to the other
 A land itself at large, a potent dukedom.
 First, in this forest let us do those ends
 That here were well begun and well begot:
 And after, every of this happy number,

That have endured shrewd days and nights with us,
 Shall share the good of our returned fortune,
 According to the measure of their states.
 Meantime, forget this new-fallen dignity,
 And fall into our rustie revelry.

Play, music! And you, brides and bridegrooms all,
 With measure heap'd in joy, to the measures fall.

Jaq. Sir, by your patience. If I heard you rightly,
 The Duke hath put on a religious life
 And thrown into neglect the pompous court?

Jaq.deB. He hath.

Jaq. To him will I: out of these convertites
 There is much matter to be heard and learn'd.
 [*To Duke S.*] You to your former honour I bequeath;
 Your patience and your virtue well deserves it:
 [*To Orl.*] You to a love, that your true faith doth merit:
 [*To Oli.*] You to your land and love, and great allies:
 [*To Silv.*] You to a long and well-deserved bed:
 [*To Touch.*] And you to wrangling; for thy loving voyage
 Is but for two months victuall'd. So, to your pleasures:
 I am for other than for dancing measures.

Duke S. Stay, Jaques, stay.

Jaq. To see no pastime I: what you would have
 I'll stay to know at your abandon'd cave. [*Exit.*]

Duke S. Proceed, proceed: we will begin these rites,
 As we do trust they'll end, in true delights.

[*A dance.*]

EPILOGUE.

Ros. It is not the fashion to see the lady the epilogue; but it
 is no more unhandsome than to see the lord the prologue.
 If it be true that good wine needs no bush, 'tis true that
 a good play needs no epilogue: yet to good wine they do
 use good bushes; and good plays prove the better by the
 help of good epilogues. What a case am I in then, that
 am neither a good epilogue, nor cannot insinuate with you
 in the behalf of a good play! I am not furnished like a
 beggar, therefore to beg will not become me: my way is
 to conjure you; and I'll begin with the women. I charge
 you, O women, for the love you bear to men, to like as
 much of this play as please you: and I charge you, O men,
 for the love you bear to women—as I perceive by your

simpering, none of you hates them—that between you and the women the play may please. If I were a woman I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me, complexions that liked me and breaths that I defied not: and, I am sure, as many as have good beards or good faces or sweet breaths will, for my kind offer, when I make curtsy, bid me farewell.

[*Exeunt.*]



HENRY IRVING AS HAMLET. 1887

The fur tippet and gold necklace indicated in Hamlet's time that one was
of noble birth

SHAKESPEARE AS DRAMATIST

[Throughout the earlier chapters the generally accepted opinions are given regarding Shakespearean questions. The following article by Prof. E. H. C. Oliphant presents the individual views of a dramatic critic who often differs with his colleagues. His discussion is likely to awaken argument and to send the reader to other authorities for comparison. Because of his life-long study of Elizabethan drama, Prof. Oliphant's judgments have particular interest for the student.—Ed.]

BY E. H. C. OLIPHANT

BEFORE one proceeds to take into consideration the work that is Shakespeare's, one has to determine just what one is going to regard as his. In the first collected edition of his output there were included three dozen plays; but outside of those there were others published as his—about a dozen in all. Most of these have been rejected—and rightly rejected—by the authorities; one of them, *Pericles*, has been admitted into the canon; and at least one other, *Two Noble Kinsmen*, is still omitted, though a majority of the best judges are of the opinion that it is fully entitled to admission. This play, however, is, like *Pericles* and three or four others not in the canon, only partly Shakespeare's—some of them being indeed only very slightly his. For that reason they are best ignored by anyone wanting to get a correct idea of the characteristics and workmanship of Shakespeare.

But, if we thus restrict ourselves to the thirty-six plays of the original folio, we need not suppose that the whole of them demand study for our purpose. More than one of the three dozen have less Shakespeare in them than have *Pericles* and *Two Noble Kinsmen*. All critics, except the most hidebound, are agreed that the three parts of *Henry VI*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Titus Andronicus*, *Timon of Athens*, and *Henry VIII* contain a great deal of work not Shakespeare's; and, if the continuation of the *Henry VI* plays, *Richard III*, has not yet been added to the number, it may yet be. If it is only "advanced" scholars who recog-

nize to how great an extent it is non-Shakespearean, it is doubtless largely owing to a conservative reluctance to question a play which has retained its place upon the boards and is consequently so thoroughly associated with the name of the master in popular estimation.

Omitting these eight plays, we have remaining twenty-eight, the study of which may serve to give us a fairly clear idea of the work of the greatest dramatist of all time; but no one need suppose that in all these the hand of Shakespeare is to be discovered throughout. There are indeed very few Elizabethan dramas that have descended to us untouched by any but the original author; and the plays of Shakespeare constitute no exception, much as many people would like to imagine that they do. Of many, in fact, Shakespeare was not the original author: his work was merely grafted on other men's, and, though he transformed most of it out of recognition, he sometimes left here and there interesting little traces of the original versions his work had superseded. In about half of the twenty-eight plays—rather less or rather more—there are traces either of an earlier writer or of an interpolator, and there are some few in which very radical investigators, such as Mr. J. M. Robertson, find a very strong non-Shakespearean element; but I think we may regard Shakespeare as having had at least a preponderating hand in all these, so that from them a tolerably accurate idea of his workmanship may be obtained.

There are people who object strenuously to Shakespeare being robbed of anything that the world has been wont to regard as his. They are either entirely ignorant of the dramatic and theatrical conditions of the period or men who, though aware of the conditions are of so academic and conservative a cast of mind that they are constitutionally incapable of escaping from the traditional view, and so assure themselves and endeavor to assure others that circumstances that applied to other writers of plays would not apply to Shakespeare. That is an idea which may be promptly and summarily dismissed from the mind. And, in point of fact, it is they, and not the radical investigators, who are unjust to the object of their veneration. They seek,

in their conservatism, to retain as Shakespeare's a great deal that is utterly unworthy of him. That is not a kindness. The radicals, on the contrary, are over-kind. There is a tendency on the part of some of them to seek to remove from Shakespeare the discredit for anything they consider unworthy of him, as if Shakespeare remained always in the highest altitudes. To do so is absurd and uncritical. The greatest of men are not always great; and occasionally a man of quite ordinary ability may reach great heights. It is not true scholarship to wish to deprive Shakespeare of everything held to be unworthy of him. The true test of his presence is not the merit of a play or a passage, an act or a scene, but its peculiar quality. There is a Shakespearean way of writing, and a way that is not Shakespeare's. We find in Elizabethan drama magnificent work that is obviously un-Shakespearean, and some comparatively poor work that is quite in his manner. To say that the latter is not his because it is not particularly meritorious, and that the other must be his because of the height it reaches, would be merely ridiculous.

Before we come to a consideration of the plays on which a conception of Shakespeare's genius must be based, there is one other remark to be made. Not only did he rewrite the work of others; he also retouched and rewrote his own. That adds very greatly to the difficulty of arranging the plays in any sound chronological order. It is a difficulty that is all too little recognized by writers on the subject, and it serves to vitiate most of the tables so carefully compiled. If a play was, say, first written in the dramatist's first period and rewritten in what the critics are pleased to call his third period, it gives altogether a false idea of his manner at either stage of his career to place it in either the earlier or the later class. Where one has to do with one of these rewritten plays, one may quite rightly regard it as having its part in the formation of a correct concept of the Shakespearean manner, but must be very careful to guard against looking on it unreservedly as helping in the creation of an idea of the literary and dramatic characteristics of Shakespeare at a particular period of his career. It is astonishing to see the number of well-equipped scholars who

have been led astray in this way, to the falsification of their conception of Shakespearean verse.

A CLASSIFICATION

These twenty-eight plays which are either wholly or preponderately the work of Shakespeare, and which are consequently the ones to which we must mainly look for our knowledge of the dramatist, may be divided into four groups, according to their material and their tone. The first class will consist of what are generally called "histories," and will contain five plays—*Richard II*, the two parts of *Henry IV*, *Henry V*, and *John*. The second will be devoted to the tragedies, and will be composed of eight—*Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, *Lear*, *Othello*, *Julius Cæsar*, *Antony and Cleopatra*, and *Coriolanus*. It is to be noted that the three last-named—the three Roman plays—are as much histories as those usually reckoned as coming within that category; but what is meant when a "history" is spoken of is a play founded on a series of events in English history, and English history alone. They are, in fact, more or less a dramatization of the old chronicles, wherefore they are more correctly styled "chronicle plays." As, moreover, the spirit—that is to say, the dramatic spirit—and the motive of every one of the Roman plays must impress readers as entirely different from the spirit and motive informing and actuating the chronicle plays, they are quite rightly differentiated from them and grouped with the tragedies with which their tone and general characteristics class them.

The third group will be given up to various species of comedy—*Love's Labor Lost*, *Twelfth Night*, and *As You Like It*, as examples of pure comedy; *Midsummer Night's Dream* and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, as farce; and *Comedy of Errors*, as what may be described as tragi-farce—that is to say, something that, for all its groundwork of farce, contains elements of tragedy, but that yet is too broadly farcical to be placed outside the comic group, which therefore consists of six plays. The fourth and last group contains the nine remaining plays—those that stand intermediate between tragedy and comedy, whether, like *The*

Merchant of Venice, *Cymbeline*, *Measure for Measure*, *All's Well That Ends Well*, and *A Winter's Tale*, they are the real type of tragi-comedy, tragic in tone, happy in denouement, or, like *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, and *The Tempest* of the type of serio-comedy, never really threatening tragedy, and yet compounded of elements that might conceivably do so, or, like *Troilus and Cressida*, a soul-tragedy, ending in the disillusionment of the hero, but not in his death.

Of the four very clearly differentiated groups of plays indicated here, it may be well to begin with the chronicle section.

THE HISTORIES

The five plays constituting this group fall into two distinctly separated divisions. The two earliest, *Richard II* and *John*, are unrelievedly tragic; the remaining three are not only less tragic in tone in their serious parts, but are also relieved by scenes of comedy entirely extraneous to the chronicle story. Shakespeare had learned that, where high tragedy was not inherent in the story, a chronicle play needed enlivening. The idea was not, however, novel: indeed, the old play, *The Famous Victories of Henry V*, on which he drew for the whole of his trilogy dealing with the hero of Agincourt, contained the germ of the comedy of *Henry IV*, though the master improved it almost out of recognition. Shakespeare reverted to the old type of chronicle play, containing buffoonery for the pleasing of the groundlings: what he did was to better the buffoonery. It was a sound instinct that made him seek comic relief in chronicle plays that were incapable of treatment in a vein of high tragedy, for the chronicle play is not a true dramatic form: it is bad drama, since it must in the nature of things consist of a number of loosely connected situations. The situations may be powerful or amusing in themselves! but they do not blend into an artistic whole. They can no more make a great play than a number of excellent airs can make an opera.

King John is a fine, but not faultless, play of its kind. It is less a play of John than of his bastard nephew, Falcon-

bridge. This is the strong man of the play, its hero, its comic relief (a comic relief that is not extraneous to the story, as is that in the Prince Hal trilogy). It is he who gives the drama most of such unity as it possesses. It is a flaw in the play that, to be paradoxical, the principal character is only subordinate. John is too wickedly weak and too weakly wicked to gain either our sympathy or our abhorrence, while Falconbridge is so masterful, so brave, so full of humor, and so truly himself that he wins our sympathy and our affection. It is mainly he who makes the play worth reading.

Richard II is very markedly an imitation of Marlowe, upon whose *Edward II* it is undeniably based. That it is wholly Shakespeare's, as are John and the two Henry IV plays, is not to be believed, though most of the critics accept it *in toto*. It contains some exceedingly fine work; but it is far from being a well-constructed play. From the purely theatrical point of view—that is to say, from the point of view of the actor—it is spoilt, or at least flawed, by one's inability to sympathize with any of the protagonists, and by one's doubt as to how we are intended to regard Bolingbroke; but it also has very grave dramatic faults, as, for example, the purposelessness of the opening quarrel, its duplication in another challenge scene later in the play, and the impossibility of arriving at the truth as to all the contradictory statements that are made. If, despite all these faults, it is to be highly rated, it is because of its episodic excellence and the rhetorical splendor of its verse.

The two parts of Henry IV are only nominally history. In Part I only some seven scenes out of nineteen deal with historical matter, and some eight are taken up with the humors of Falstaff and his crew. That is remarkable enough in a play which purports to be a history; but in Part II the comic portion has become of even greater importance, not merely occupying about nine scenes out of a total of nineteen, but so dominating the play that the historical or quasi-historical scarcely interests us at all. This part then is in the main a comedy of manners, however we may have to class it among the chronicle plays. If we rank these two plays exceedingly high, it is not as chronicle plays, but in

spite of the fact that they belong to that category, or, rather, because they belong to it only nominally. They are great because of Falstaff, though Part I also contains a memorable figure in Hotspur. Lacking any such attraction, Part II would take no high rank if it had to depend upon the interest of its historical story. It is a chronicle play without a central figure.

Of these five plays, the one that has been most successful in holding the stage is indubitably *Henry V*. It does not follow that it is the best play. Popularity among actors is not dependent upon literary or dramatic merit, but upon the opportunity a play affords the actor. *Henry V* stands out from its fellows because of its magnificent rant, and because its principal character has so much to do. It enables an actor of fine physique and thunderous voice to strut the stage like a turkeycock and delight himself with his finely rounded periods. He monopolizes almost all the attention, the only other characters to obtain any being the comedians Fluellen and Pistol. Yet, in point of fact, the play grips more in reading than when one sees it acted, because it is too "talky" to please an audience, while in reading the lack of action is not noticed. As a play it is characterized by grave faults; but it is a fine and stirring dramatic poem.

The story of the play may be briefly sketched. Having assured himself that, under the Salic law, he is entitled to the throne of France, Henry inaugurates his claim by a demand for certain domains pertaining to the crown of France. The Dauphin replies contemptuously by sending the English king a gift of tennis balls. Henry intimates that he will avenge the insult.

In the second Act, as he is about to depart for France, to undertake the work of conquest, he discovers a plot to murder him. He has the three conspirators put to death. In Act III the King forces Harfleur to surrender, and then, with an army greatly reduced by sickness and privations, and outnumbered five to one, prepares for battle at Agincourt. The French are extremely confident, and loudly boast of the victory that will be theirs on the morrow. Henry, insisting on the good behavior of his troops, orders

Bardolph, an old associate of himself and Falstaff, to be hanged for robbing a church.

In Act IV, the monarch goes about disguised among his troops to find out how they regard the terrible position in which they are placed, and the next morning he so enheartens them by his glorious example that a splendid victory is gained. In the final act Henry proceeds to the French court, where he has an interview with the Princess Katherine, and, despite linguistic difficulties, conveys to her the fact that he loves her, and, when he has won her, in defiance of French custom, seals the compact with a kiss. With the hand of Katherine he obtains the throne of France.

The comic element of the play is supplied by the fiery Welsh captain Fluellen and the braggartly coward Pistol, one of Falstaff's followers, the principal incident being the eating of the leek by the latter at the Welshman's command. Falstaff does not appear; but we are told of his death.

There can be no doubt that Henry is Shakespeare's hero; but in order to admire him it is necessary to forget or not to know the Prince Hal of the earlier plays, where he figures at first as a reckless reprobate, and afterwards as a callous prig. Whether the play is wholly Shakespeare's may be doubted.

THE COMEDIES

Next let us deal with the half-dozen plays that we have classed as comedies. Three of these—*Love's Labor Lost*, *Comedy of Errors*, and *Midsummer Night's Dream* are early. The last-named is to be regarded as wholly Shakespeare's; but the other two contain remnants of older plays on which they were founded, while in *Love's Labor Lost*, and perhaps in the other also, Shakespeare's own work is of more than one date.

If it were not Shakespeare's, *Love's Labor Lost* would be considered a very wearisome play. It is almost destitute of action; and its talk, however clever, is not particularly entertaining, nor is the characterization such as to redeem the faults of the play. The *Comedy of Errors*, on the contrary, is excellent of its sort. Beginning as potential tragedy, and developing as farce, it is the first work in which

Shakespeare shows his mastery of theatrical technique. In truth he never bettered it, though, having regard to its farcical character, the critics never like to say so. It is hardly necessary to say that he did much greater work afterwards; but in respect of masterly management of his material, the easy handling of a complicated plot, and the liveliness and breathlessness of the action, he here reaches his highest point. It is not of course character study: that would be out of place in a play of its nature; but the sketching of the various natures of the persons of the play is at least adequate. It is great fun to see acted, whereas *Love's Labor's Lost* is boresome.

There are people who may object to *A Midsummer Night's Dream* being spoken of as farce; yet farce it is—fairy farce, poetical farce, romantic farce, if you like, but still farce. It is a thing of sheer delight, whether read in the closet or acted upon the stage. (It is difficult to understand how the idea has got about that it is not a good acting play: it is one of the most entertaining of all Shakespeare's comedies). There are three separate strands in the cord of this drama—the fairy element, the rustic element, and the romantic element—and they are interwoven with masterly skill. The characterization of the lovers is weak; but Bottom and his fellow clowns are sketched with a sure hand, and are amongst the dramatist's best low comedy characters.

The *Merry Wives of Windsor* is indubitably of more than one date and probably not wholly Shakespeare's. The tradition that he wrote it in a hurry to gratify Queen Elizabeth's desire to see Falstaff in love is quite likely to be true; but, if so, what he seems to have done is to have taken an old play, perhaps his own, perhaps someone else's, and to have worked Falstaff into it. It is exceedingly amusing, and, when well acted, keeps an audience in a constant simmer of merriment; but Falstaff is only occasionally the great Falstaff of the earlier plays. The characterization is, however, much better than the critics seem willing to admit; but there are lacunæ in the conduct of the story, the result, presumably, of the haste in which the work was done and the difficulty of grafting new matter on an old frame.

Whether *As You Like It* or *Twelfth Night* is to be reckoned the crown of Shakespeare's work in comedy is a matter of opinion. It may be that men, as a rule, prefer the latter, which is also the later, while the other makes more appeal to women. There is a touch of horse-play in *Twelfth Night* which in feminine eyes detracts from its merits; but it has the more interesting story, the finer characterization, and the defter workmanship. The open-air quality of *As You Like It* has perhaps given it a place somewhat above its merits, great as these are. But what a magnificent gallery of portraits these two plays offer—Malvolio and Jaques, Sir Toby Belch and Touchstone, Viola and Rosalind! Both are love stories, imagined with decency and told with delicacy. Both are excellent to read; but, though *As You Like It* is the more frequently staged, its rival acts the better.

Let us consider the story of *As You Like It*. A dispossessed and banished duke has made a woodland home for himself and his faithful followers in the Forest of Arden (by which must be understood the French Ardennes). His daughter Rosalind has, however, remained at the court of his usurping brother Frederick with her cousin Celia, the usurper's daughter, whom she loves. In the opening act the girls see Orlando, a young man to whom Rosalind is immediately attracted, overthrow the ducal wrestler. Frederick banishes Rosalind from the court, and Celia determines to accompany her. Rosalind decides to don man's attire.

In Act II, accompanied by the jester Touchstone, they reach the Forest of Arden, and buy a farm. Orlando, meantime, on returning home, is told by an old servant, Adam, that his wicked elder brother Oliver has plotted to kill him. He and Adam therefore escape to the forest, where they are welcomed by the old duke. In the next act Rosalind learns that Orlando is in the forest and is occupying himself in the lover-like pastime of pinning love-verses to her on the trees. Meeting him in the forest, still in her male attire, she leads him on to confess his passion, and offers to act the part of Rosalind, so that he may cure himself of his love by wooing her as the youth Ganymede.

In the fourth Act this strange love-making proceeds in serio-comic mood till Orlando saves his brother Oliver from a lion. Oliver has been sent by Frederick to find him; but now the two are reconciled, and Oliver is sent as the bearer of a blood-stained handkerchief to Rosalind, to prove to her that, if Orlando does not keep his tryst with her, it is because he has been wounded by a lion. Rosalind promptly, in defiance of her costume, faints. In the last act Oliver and Celia fall in love and decide to marry. Ganymede promises Orlando to produce Rosalind also; and, as Touchstone has contracted himself to a country wench, and Phebe, a shepherdess, who has been casting herself unavailingly at Ganymede, has at length consented to marry her devoted shepherd lover, a quadruple wedding is arranged. This duly takes place, and the general happiness is increased by the news that Frederick has resolved to enter a monastery and restore to the banished Duke his possessions—a denouement which might have been more credible had it been anticipated.

This brief résumé of the story takes no account of the melancholy Jaques, one of the most prominent characters, because, though he monopolizes a good deal of the dialogue, he does not in any way influence the plot.

THE TRAGEDIES

The greatness of every one of the eight plays we have grouped together under this heading is undeniable. Two of them—*Romeo and Juliet* and *Julius Cæsar*—contain a good deal that is not Shakespeare's; but *Hamlet* (as it stands in the folio), *Macbeth* (though some critics have questioned parts of it), *Othello*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* are wholly his, and the remaining two have but little that is not genuine.

Romeo and Juliet is one of Shakespeare's two great love tragedies, the other being *Antony and Cleopatra*. The former is distinctly a young man's work; the latter, an old—or at least a mature—man's. The one shows the glory of an overmastering passion; the other, its horror. The earlier play is masterly in construction and in its use of dramatic irony. It shows both his insight into character

and his mastery of phrase. He creates his atmosphere and holds us in the grip of his story from start to finish. The later play, magnificent as it is, is less enthralling; its dramatic technique is less convincing; though its characterization is wonderful, it errs somewhat on the side of long-windedness; and, though the story is an absorbing one in itself, there is no character who really wins our sympathy.

Having spoken of *Antony and Cleopatra*, it may be well to deal next with the other two Roman tragedies. *Julius Cæsar* is a poorly constructed play, which looks as if indeed it may be, as has been suggested, a boiling-down into one of what was originally a play in two parts. It breaks in the middle. Cæsar, who gives his name to it, dies early in the third act; yet there is reason for the play being named after him, since the rest of it is devoted to his revenge. He dominates it more in fact after he is dead than while he is living, for as a living man he is depicted most unflatteringly. From start to finish the two chief characters are Brutus and Cassius, though Mark Antony also occupies a large place. It is for its characterization and its forensic eloquence that the play is memorable, not for its construction.

The greatness of *Coriolanus* consists in its study of the principal character; but it is against its popular acceptance that he inspires little affection or even interest. It is very wordy, much too long, and not particularly actable, while the much too compact utterance which Shakespeare affected in his later work is also calculated to make its stage presentation difficult. With all their faults, we are in the presence of greater work when we turn to *Hamlet*, *Macbeth*, and *Lear*.

These three, especially *Macbeth* and *Lear*, are in a sense chronicle plays; indeed, the first quarto of *Lear* describes it as a "chronicle history"; but the tone of none of them is that of the chronicle play. *Hamlet*, which was certainly based on the work of an older dramatist, is generally regarded as Shakespeare's masterpiece. As a philosophical work it deserves its reputation; as a psychological study its only rival is *Macbeth*; and it is hard to find any better example of dramatic technique in its higher reaches; but the play ends in a shambles, and there are flaws in the

telling of the story and in the management of the plot, the result probably of the patching to which the play has been subjected and of the extent to which Shakespeare considered himself bound to adhere to the events of the original drama, with which the public may be presumed to have been well acquainted. In *Lear* Shakespeare reaches his utmost tragic heights; and the masterly skill with which the madness of the fool is contrasted with the madness of his royal master is work of dramatic genius at its highest. *Macbeth* is perhaps, taking everything into consideration, the finest of all the tragedies; but from the point of view of construction, of pure dramatic technique *Othello* occupies the prime place.

In this wonderful play, a Moorish general in the service of Venice, Othello, woos and wins Desdemona, daughter of Brabantio, a senator. Othello is ordered to Cyprus to fight against the Turks, and arranges to have his wife conveyed thither by one of his officers, Iago, and the latter's wife, Emilia. In Act II, Iago, hating Othello because Cassio has been preferred to be his lieutenant, makes Cassio drunk, misrepresents matters to the general, and secures Cassio's supersession. In the next act, Iago, after poisoning Othello's mind with insinuations regarding Desdemona and Cassio, arranges to have Othello overhear Cassio ask for Desdemona's help in securing his reinstatement. Her efforts on the disgraced man's behalf confirm Othello's suspicions. Desdemona is greatly perturbed by her husband's changed attitude towards her and is further worried by the disappearance of a handkerchief which Othello had charged her to keep, but which Emilia has stolen at Iago's instigation, and which Iago has placed in Cassio's room.

In the penultimate act Othello sees Cassio give the handkerchief to a courtesan, and he determines to kill Desdemona, though both she and Emilia declare her innocence. In the last act Othello strangles his wife. Emilia, too late, proves to the general Desdemona's innocence and Iago's villainy. Iago thereupon stabs her to death, and Othello commits suicide. Cassio is made Governor of Cyprus; and Iago is sentenced to torture and death. Iago has been warmly praised as the greatest villain in the world

of drama; but there must be many who find it difficult to believe in anyone quite so deliberately diabolical as he.

THE INTERMEDIATES

Of the nine remaining plays, *Troilus and Cressida*, that strange and unpleasant play, so magnificent as literature, so unsatisfactory as drama (as anyone who has seen it played must admit), need not detain us long. Many critics have professed to see in it another hand besides Shakespeare's; but probably the wish has been father to the thought, for the verse seems all of a piece. *Measure for Measure* is equally unpleasant, and the blame for it is not wholly Shakespeare's. *All's Well That Ends Well* also, interesting as it is, repels by its objectionable theme. *Two Gentlemen of Verona* is an early work, slow in its movement, unsatisfactory in its conclusion, and sacrificing truth to dramatic exigency and character to the need for a happy ending. It is a play containing some good material, but utterly spoilt in the telling. It was based on the work of another writer, like the much greater *Merchant of Venice*. This finely constructed drama combines with wonderful cleverness no less than four different stories—that of the casket, that of the bond, that of the elopement of Jessica, and that of the ring—though the first is disposed of early, and the last is introduced late. The way in which the audience is kept in suspense in the trial scene is masterly. Whether, however, Shakespeare intended Shylock to be the hero of the play, or at least its central figure, as he has become, may be doubted. The fact that he drops out in the fourth act affords a strong indication to the contrary.

Cymbeline is magnificent as poetry, but unsatisfactory as drama, despite the unusual thoroughness with which everything is accounted for at the close. The story on which the play depends for its attractiveness reaches its climax before we get to the middle of the play, and henceforward the interest is divided. Another blot on the play is the uncertain and contradictory drawing of the character of Cloten.

Much Ado About Nothing is ranked by some critics on the same plane with *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night*.

Fine as it unquestionably is, it is not to be set up on such a pedestal. The comedy of Beatrice and Benedick is capital, and the welding of the two plots leaves little to be desired; but a hero so contemptible as Claudio is a sad handicap for any play.

Like *Much Ado About Nothing*, *The Winter's Tale* may be wholly Shakespeare's. It shares with *The Tempest* the first place among the plays of this group; but, wonderfully attractive as it is, perfect in its atmosphere, delightful in its characterization of the happy rogue Autolycus and the charming maid Perdita, and unforgettable in its literary mastery, it is flawed technically by the shifting of its interest at the end of the third act.

The Tempest is the last play of Shakespeare's on which he worked alone, or at any rate in which his work appears alone, unless indeed the masque be, as is possible, the work of another. It is not flawless in construction, and may be judged from one or two inconsistencies and defects to have been cut down for presentation. It stands alone among Shakespeare's plays by virtue of its introduction of and dependence upon an element of magic, and resembles *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, and that play alone, in its employment of a supernatural being to fill a large and essential part in the plot. Prospero, a former Duke of Milan, has been dethroned by his brother Antonio, with the assistance of the King of Naples, and set adrift with his three-year-old daughter, Miranda, in a boat in which they reach an enchanted island. There, at the start of the play, they have been living for twelve years, alone, save for a half-human monster, Caliban, and a sprite, Ariel, whom Prospero has freed from a spell that bound him. In the last act, Prospero's enemies, with Ferdinand, son of the King of Naples, are wrecked upon the island; and Ferdinand is, by Ariel, at Prospero's command, enticed by invisible music to Prospero's cave. Miranda, seeing a young man for the first time, falls in love with him.

In Act II Sebastian (the King of Naples' brother) and Antonio plot to kill the king but are thwarted by Ariel, while a couple of drunken sailors, Stephano and Trinculo, meet and make merry with Caliban. In the next act Pros-

pero tests the love of Ferdinand and Miranda for one another by setting the former to haul logs. Meanwhile Ariel overhears Caliban and the two sailors plotting to take possession of the island, and, after fooling them for a time turns his attention to the king and his companions, tantalizing them with visions of a banquet which disappears as they reach for it. In Act IV Prospero gives Ferdinand his daughter's hand, and then calls up spirits in the shape of hounds to give Caliban and his two companions a bad time. In the closing act Prospero reveals himself to the King and Antonio, who beg his forgiveness and restore him his dukedom. Prospero, on his part, renounces magic, charges Ariel to ensure them smooth seas for their voyage to Naples, and then frees the faithful spirit. The greatness of the play consists not in characterization or in construction, but in the wonderful way in which the right atmosphere has been caught and held, and by the beauty of the verse, which it is not easy to surpass, search where one may.

It is not, of course, possible to obtain an adequate idea of the greatness of Shakespeare by the study of only a few dramas; but there are many who have not the time to dip into more than a few. To such there may be hints sufficient here to guide them in the choice of those few; but, while it is well to study at least one play in each of the four sections into which his work has been divided, let it not be forgotten that his greatest and most characteristic work, that on which his fame is most securely grounded, is to be found among his mighty tragedies. For almost the least of them almost the best of the other plays might be sacrificed, should the need arise.







